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WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MONGOLIA

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THE HU-TUK-TU OR LIVING BUDDHA, SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL SOVEREIGN OF MONGOLIA
(Photograph lent by Dr. G. E. Morrison)

WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MONGOLIA

BY

H. G. C. PERRY-AYSCOUGH

M.A.(Oxon.), F.R.G.S., THE CHINESE POSTAL SERVICE

AND

CAPTAIN R. B. OTTER-BARRY

F.R.G.S., THE ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR CLAUDE MACDONALD

G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., &c., H.B.M. MINISTER AT PEKING (1896–1900) AND AMBASSADOR AT TOKIO (1900–1912)

ILLUSTRATED WITH 50 PHOTOGRAPHS AND A MAP

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Sketch Map of MONGOLIA

Showing the routes followed by

H.G.C. PERRY-AYSCOUGH M.A. & CAPT. R.B. OTTER-BARRY

Scale 1:12,000,000 or 1 Inch = 189·4 Statute Miles

Reference

- Approximate boundary between Mongolia and China
- " " " Siberia
- " " " Outer and Inner Mongolia
- H.G.C. Perry-Ayscough's route shown thus
- Capt. R.B. Otter-Barry's " "
- Railways open to traffic
- Railways under construction

Note

Compiled from Russian maps lent by His Excellency M. Korostovetz, and from a route traverse carried out by Capt. Otter Barry.

Published by John Lane, The Bodley Head

AUTHORS' NOTE

THE Mongolian characters on the cover of this book denote the title of the *New Mirror*, the Mongol monthly newspaper published at Urga, under Russian auspices, in March 1913.

The map has been compiled by Mr. H. F. Milne, draughtsman at the Royal Geographical Society, from Russian maps lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz, and from a route traverse carried out by Captain Otter-Barry.

The terms Inner and Outer Mongolia, that frequently recur throughout the book, define the northern and southern portions of Mongolia respectively.

The words *van*, *gol*, and *nor* are the Mongol equivalents for prince, river, and lake.

It has been found necessary, since this book went to the press, in order to bring the political situation up to date, to write an "Afterword," which will be found at the end of the book after the Appendices.

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PREFACE

One of the writer's most picturesque memories of the Peking of fifteen years ago was the annual advent in the latter days of December of the Mongol traders from the far north.

Peking itself was fast in the grip of the Ice King, the thermometer at night frequently falling below zero, but in the daytime the glorious winter sun of North China lit up the long icicles which hung from the roofs, and shone on the glittering snow which concealed, for the time being, the horrible dirt of the streets of that ancient city.

Then it was that long caravans of camels in all the glory of their thick winter coats, escorted by their Mongol owners riding shaggy ponies, filed through the north-east gate of the Tartar city, the same gate before which, more than fifty years ago, the artillery of the armies of France and England stood ready to destroy, when the hour struck denoting the expiry of the Allied Ultimatum. This hour, most unfortunately as many think now,

never came, for the Chinese authorities "climbed down," as they have not infrequently done since.

These Mongol caravans, or at any rate the great majority of them, wended their way through the narrow streets of the Tartar city, making for its south-western corner. Here is situated the Legation quarter, which then consisted of a collection of well-ordered diplomatic dwellings, for the most part embowered in trees, and hedged about in spring with white lilac.

In a corner of this quarter stood a large open space, some four or five acres in extent, known from time immemorial as the "Mongol Market." Here the caravans came to a halt; tents, for the most part made of white or grey felt, were pitched, and the cheery little Mongols, with their comely, apple-cheeked wives and daughters, busied themselves unpacking their wares, and settling in for the winter.

A short cut to this market led through the grounds of the British Legation, and many a time, at the courteous request of the leader of a caravan when the hour was late, or when the damsels perched upon the camels were more than usually comely, the gates of the Legation would be opened and a procession of majestic camels laden with frozen game of all sorts, antelopes, hares, pheasants, etc., and surrounded with a

crowd of laughing Mongols, would slowly pass through, while the ladies perched above, dressed in many colours, with long golden earrings hanging down almost to their shoulders, with rosy cheeks and bright eyes, bowed and smiled their thanks for the honour done to them of a free passage across British territory.

For sale in the Mongol market throughout the winter, frozen game of all sorts was to be found, very welcome to the housekeepers of the various Legations; but the staple commodity seemed to be white and grey felt, which the Mongols manufactured themselves, and which the Chinese used for many purposes. The young bloods of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps purchased this felt to have it made into "over all" boots for going out to social gatherings in the evening as a protection against the dry, crisp snow, also against the cold contact of frozen stirrup-irons when riding.

With the coming of the early spring the Mongol tents were struck, the caravans faded away, and their owners went back to their nomad life in the northern deserts, to return only with the ice and snow of the following winter.

The Mongol Market itself was shut in on the east and south by the Legations of two of the great powers, England and Russia. On the north was

the Imperial Carriage Park of the Chinese Emperors; and on the west also, China was represented by many official buildings and private residences, so that the Powers most interested in the future of Mongolia also dominated this little corner of Mongol life and commercial activity.

And so matters remained until the Boxer madness of 1900, when "Linden saw another sight" and the walls of the two Legations were hurriedly loopholed, British and Russian marines stood shoulder to shoulder to repel the attacks of the Chinese regular troops, who swarmed in the Carriage Park and the official buildings to the west. The market, so short a time before the scene of so much good-natured bustle and barter, was swept with rifle and shell fire, so that it was certain death to venture upon it; this lasted for two long months, until the market-place itself was scored and ploughed up by shot and shell, the surrounding walls and buildings almost in ruins, and the back gate of the British Legation, through which the stately caravans were wont to pass, was battered out of all semblance to a gate, and had become a huge barricaded rent in the Legation wall.

But the inevitable day of reckoning came, and now the Carriage Park, the Chinese official buildings, and the Mongol market itself have all disappeared,

and the Legations of England and Russia have spread themselves over what was once Chinese Imperial and official property, and also over the one little spot where for three months of the year, Mongolia was in evidence in the capital of China.

Much the same thing, though of course on an infinitely greater scale, and with a notable difference, is going on in the far north of the Chinese Empire. Russia is rapidly spreading herself over the markets of Outer Mongolia and pushing China back and out. The notable difference is that whereas in the little episode I have mentioned, the British and Russian Legations pushed together, now Russia pushes, and Great Britain would seem only to be looking on.

In the introduction of the interesting and admirable book *With the Russians in Mongolia*, the Authors point out that "Russia is doubtless aiming to obtain a dominating influence in Mongolia in order that she may have a buffer state between herself and China." It is also stated that "Tibet and Mongolia are very closely allied, their religion is identical, their population in both cases consists of fanatical followers of their respective spiritual leaders, the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Hu-tuk-tu of Mongolia, the former being the spiritual head of both countries. The dominating influence in either Mongolia or Tibet means the eventual dominating

influence in both these countries. Russia is obtaining this influence in Mongolia; Great Britain might have obtained the same rights over Tibet as Russia has obtained over Mongolia, and Russian diplomats quite expected Great Britain to take this action."

This statement is corroborated by a very recent traveller in Mongolia, Mr. Manico Gull, who, in a lecture delivered a few days ago in London, said that what Russia was aiming at was the creation, not of a buffer state, but of a sphere of special interest which in course of time would enable her to say "hands off" to everybody else.

It would therefore seem that the time has arrived for Great Britain to "spread herself" over Tibet in something of the same way that Russia is spreading over Mongolia.

One other reminiscence of the great uprising in Peking of 1900 which has its parallel in the doings of the present day :—

Many months before law and order had been restored out of chaos, and at a time (the early autumn of 1900) when the various quarters of the Tartar and Chinese cities which go to make up the capital of China were held by strong detachments of the troops of the Great Powers, it became known that peremptory orders had come from Petersburg to the effect that all Russian troops

were to be instantly withdrawn. Notwithstanding the local protests of the officers commanding the other detachments, and indeed of the Russian officers themselves, who had acquired very comfortable quarters within the walls of the Summer Palace, the troops of the Tsar, numbering many thousands, turned their backs on the grey walls of Peking and marched away to Manchuria, ostensibly to quell certain disturbances which had taken place there, and incidentally to consolidate Russia's already strong position and sphere of influence in that Dominion, the first stone of which had been laid by the lease taken of Port Arthur in 1898.

Events and disturbances in Peking, heralding and accompanying the recent revolution in China, and the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty, caused the troops of the Great Powers to assemble again in her capital, and Russian soldiers once more formed part of the international and very effective body of police which guarded foreign interests, and helped to maintain order in Peking and its neighbourhood.

Within the last few days news has come that peremptory orders have been received from Petersburg instructing the Russian troops to leave Peking forthwith; these orders have come as a great surprise, for the necessity of an international force in and

around the capital at the present moment is practically as great as ever.

But this time these troops will not march to Manchuria, but to Mongolia, there to assist in consolidating and strengthening the position Russia has taken up in the latter province. What will happen in the future it is not easy to say,—the prophets of 1900 were all hopelessly wrong as to the future of Manchuria,—but a perusal of the pages which follow will give the reader food for much thought and material wherewith to form an opinion. It is possible that a strong reaction may take place amongst the Mongols against their new masters, but it is more than likely that this reaction will come too late.

CLAUDE M. MACDONALD.

Christmas, 1913.

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WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MONGOLIA

CORRIGENDUM

Page vii, line 12, *for* "northern and southern" *read* "southern and northern."

WITH THE RUSSIANS IN MONGOLIA

INTRODUCTION

"HOW does Russian influence affect British interests?" is the first question which arises in the mind of a Britisher when reading of any Russian advance in the Far East.

There seems no doubt that Russia's aim in obtaining a dominating influence in Mongolia has been in order to obtain a buffer state between herself and China. Her Eastern Diplomatic Authorities own that they fear that China may become some day too strong for Russia. Russia has had one experience of the rapid growth of an Eastern nation's military prowess, and she does not intend to allow China to balk her well-laid plans. She fears Chinese insidious commercial enterprise, Chinese admirable colonial methods. She does not want China along her frontier, and the subsequent expense of a frontier line to guard. From a British point of view, one cannot help seeing the danger of any Russian in-

fluence in Mongolia. Tibet and Mongolia are very closely allied. Their religion is identical. Their population in both cases consists of fanatical followers of their respective spiritual leaders, the "Dalai Lama" of Tibet, the "Hu-tuk-tu" of Mongolia, the former being the spiritual head of the faith of both countries.[1] Lamas from Lhasa are constantly visiting Urga, and many Mongol Lamas receive their education in Lhasa. The dominating influence in either Mongolia or Tibet means the eventual dominating influence in both these countries. Russia is obtaining this influence in Mongolia. Great Britain might have obtained the same rights over Tibet as Russia has obtained over Mongolia, and Russian Diplomats quite expected Great Britain to take this action.

In December 1912, Agban Dordjief, a Buriat, the accredited representative of the Dalai Lama of Tibet, who was on his way to St. Petersburg, visited Urga to discuss with the Mongolian Hu-tuk-tu religious questions of import to both countries. He took the opportunity of informing the Mongols that the Dalai Lama had returned to Lhasa under British protection, and was inclined in future to seek the protection of both Great Britain *and Russia*. He therefore pro-

[1] The Dalai Lama of Tibet resides at Lhasa. The Hu-tuk-tu of Mongolia at Urga. Mr. Douglas Carruthers in his *Unknown Mongolia* refers to the "Dalai Lama at Urga."

posed that Mongolia and Tibet should adopt a scheme of mutual support against Chinese aggression. He told them that such a step would produce a very good impression on the whole Buddhist world, and materially strengthen the position of both countries.

The Hu-tuk-tu being much flattered by this proposal of the Dalai Lama, seeing that it stipulated that he should be equal politically to his spiritual superior, naturally accepted it, and the result was the signing of an Agreement between Mongolia and Tibet which formulated a scheme of mutual support and promise of assistance to one another in case of emergency. This Mongol-Tibetan Treaty, which is given at the end of the Introduction, is of interest, inasmuch as it is believed to be the first copy to be translated into English. The delightful way in which the chronology is expressed, and the oriental names and titles of the signatories, carry one's mind back more to the reading of the Arabian Nights than to modern diplomacy.

Russia's advance in the East of late years has been rapid,—far more rapid than would have been expected. She has chosen her opportunities well. Her manipulation of the Mongolian question was admirably carried out during the Chinese Revolution, at a time when the eyes of Europe were riveted on the Balkan States, and the consequent questions

which were arising in the near East. Russia is a virile race, possessing a country with endless resources. Her merchants are constantly seeking new ground where profits are large and easily obtained. It would be fatal to Great Britain to allow Russia to further increase her influence in Tibet.

The relations of the Russians with the Mongols compare very favourably with those that have always existed between Chinese and Mongols. This no doubt is partially accounted for by the intermarrying for many years between Russians and neighbouring tribes on the frontier. The Chinese rarely intermix in this way with the Mongols; rather have they ousted the Mongol from his pasture grounds in Inner Mongolia, to make room for Chinese colonisation. Russia has made but little effort to convert the Mongols to Christianity. Peter the Great attempted to convert the Hu-tuk-tu himself about the year 1700, but met with no success. Urga itself can only boast of one solitary priest of the Russian Orthodox Church. The very nomad habits of the Mongols prevent them from ever becoming westernised, and disease and insanitary conditions aided by Lamaism are very gradually reducing their population. A race that is too lazy to till the ground, and that looks upon trade as almost degrading, devoting itself cheerfully to obtaining its

livelihood by the easy method of tending flocks and herds, could never be expected to adopt Western habits. The only gold-mining concern, the Mongolore Mining Company, started by Mr. Victor von Grotte, to develop the enormous mineral wealth in North Mongolia, was obliged to import Chinese labour from 1000 miles away, simply because the Mongols refused at any price to work the mines. This company so far has merely scratched the mineral wealth in one small area of the Yero River, and the country cries out for capital and enterprising men to undertake the development of gold, silver, coal, and lead, that abound in the northern valleys. With a railway from Verhne Udinsk to Kiachta, Kiachta to Urga, and from Urga across the Gobi Desert to join up with an extension of the Peking-Kalgan Railway to the west at Kwei-hua-Cheng, trade possibilities will arrive for the employment of much capital and commercial enterprise. Russia will welcome foreign traders, and before many years this railway, which will bring Peking four days nearer to London, must be a "fait accompli." To the commercial man, the miner, and the sportsman, Mongolia opens up a fine field in the near future, and even the eastern portion of the Gobi Desert could, by the employment of artesian wells, be converted into grazing land.

At present the Russians are endeavouring to counteract the deleterious power of the Lamas by stimulating the Mongols to form a military force. It is necessary to uphold the temporal power of the Hu-tuk-tu. At present he owes this power to his fanatical followers. Education, it is feared, would so contradict the absurd teachings of the Lamas as to make them antagonistic, and a force sufficiently strong to counteract the Lamas' power is thought to be the only method.

With the object of training a Mongol army on modern lines, Russian instructors have been introduced.

The Mongols, though fine horsemen and descended from a race of warriors, do not care for anything but the militia form of soldiering.

With wise training and leadership they should compare well with the Chinese as soldiers, though they would be inferior to the Sikh; but it behoves the Russians to choose carefully their instructors, and for that matter their civil advisers, and to continue to inculcate into the Mongols absolute loyalty to their chief, the Hu-tuk-tu. Mongolia is a country which, if wisely administered, has a future before it. The administration of the Chinese failed. The country of Mongolia is crying out for reform. It remains now with the Russians to carry out its development.

In Mongolia to-day there is about as much Russian influence as there was in the Caucasus at the time of the Crimean War. What amount of Russian influence will be felt in Mongolia sixty years hence?

A glance at the map will show that in *Unknown Mongolia* Mr. Douglas Carruthers describes his travels on the border-line of Mongolia proper. In the course of his journey he explored the district of Uriankhai, in the extreme N.W. of Mongolia, whose ownership is disputed between the Mongol and Russian Governments. His interesting book deals with all phases of life on this rugged frontier of Mongolia. The authors' journeys described in this volume took them practically N. and S. and E. and W. through Mongolia proper, an entirely different country many miles away from Uriankhai. Mongolia proper cannot be said to be unknown, but it is certainly very little known. Between them the authors visited the majority of important places in the country.

Captain Otter-Barry's visit to Mongolia took place very shortly before the outbreak of the Chinese Revolution, when Mongolia still owned allegiance to Hsuan Tung, the last Emperor of the Ching dynasty of China. He travelled from China across the Gobi Desert, then viâ Urga, and the Yero mines to Kiachta and Siberia.

Mr. Perry-Ayscough journeyed in Mongolia when China had become a Republic, and when Mongolia was autonomous under Russian protection. The authors have therefore been able to compare the state of affairs in Mongolia, and Chinese, Mongol, and Russian relations at two distinct periods.

Mr. Perry-Ayscough was at Urga shortly after the conclusion of the Mongol-Tibetan Treaty, and was fortunate enough, thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the Russian officials whom he met, to be given every opportunity of seeing for himself the actual state of affairs in the interior of Mongolia at Uliassutai and Kobdo, where Russia has troops and consulates.

The concluding portion of his journey from Kosh Agatch to Novo Nikolaievsk viâ Biisk and Barnaul took him through the Altai Mountains amongst the beautiful scenery of the Chuyan Alps, and was of interest as showing the rapid strides in progress and colonisation that Russia has made in the Altai district—the richest and most densely populated in Siberia.

Monsieur Korostovetz has rendered the authors every help and assistance, and has kindly supplied many of the photos. It was he who, as Plenipotentiary of the Russian Government at Urga,

concluded the Russo-Mongolian Agreement in November 1912.

The authors are much indebted to Sir Claude MacDonald for writing the Preface, and for his helpful suggestions regarding the book.

The authors' thanks are also due to Dr. Morrison, Political Adviser to the Chinese Government, for his advice and encouragement, and for so kindly lending several of the photos printed in the book, and to the various officials and merchants, Chinese and Russian, with whom they came in contact.

The spelling adopted by the Chinese Postal Service has, as far as possible, been used for places mentioned in China and Mongolia.

The first three chapters of the book contain a description of the connection of the Russians with Mongolia, the general political situation, and a short account of the Mongol race.

Chapters I., II., III., VII., VIII., and IX. are the result of collaboration. Chapters IV., V., VI., X., and XI. are written by Captain Otter-Barry; and Chapters XII.–XVIII. by Mr. Perry-Ayscough.

Mongol-Tibetan Treaty

Concluded at Urga on 29th December 1912

Whereas Mongolia and Tibet, having freed themselves from the Manchu dynasty and separated themselves from China, have become independent States, and whereas the two States have always professed one and the same religion, and to the end that their ancient mutual friendships may be strengthened: on the part of the Government of the Sovereign of the Mongolian people—Nikta Biliktu da Lama Rabdan, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Assistant Minister General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun; on the part of the Dalai Lama, ruler of Tibet — Gujir tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan-Agwan, donir Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the bank, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary, have agreed on the following:—

Article 1

The Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet, approves of and acknowledges the formation of an independent Mongolian State, and the proclamation on the 9th day of the 11th month of the year of the Swine, of the master of the Yellow Faith Je-tsun Dampa Lama as the Sovereign of the land.

ARTICLE 2

The Sovereign of the Mongolian people Je-tsun Dampa Lama approves and acknowledges the formation of an independent State and the proclamation of the Dalai Lama as Sovereign of Tibet.

ARTICLE 3

Both States shall take measures, after mutual consideration, for the prosperity of the Buddhist faith.

ARTICLE 4

Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall henceforth, for all time, afford each other aid against dangers from without and from within.

ARTICLE 5

Both States, each on its own territory, shall afford mutual aid to their subjects, travelling officially and privately on religious or on State business.

ARTICLE 6

Both States, the Mongolian and the Tibetan, shall, as formerly, carry on mutual trade in the produce of their lands,—in goods, cattle, etc., and likewise open industrial institutions.

ARTICLE 7

Henceforth transactions on credit shall be allowed only with the knowledge and permission of official institutions; without such permission no claims shall be examined by Government Institutions.

Should such agreements have been entered into before the conclusion of the present treaty, and should the parties thereto be unable to settle matters amicably, while the loss suffered is great, the payment of such debts may be enforced by the said institutions, but in no case shall the debts concern the *Shabinars* and *Hoshuns*.

(*Shabinars*—people who depend from the Court of Hu-tuk-tu and pay taxes to the Court Department.)

(*Hoshun*—principality.)

ARTICLE 8

Should it be necessary to supplement the articles of this treaty, the Mongolian and Tibetan Governments shall appoint special Plenipotentiaries, who shall come to an Agreement according to the circumstances then existing.

ARTICLE 9

The present treaty shall come into force on the date of the signature thereof.

Plenipotentiaries of the Mongolian Government: Acting Ministers of Foreign Affairs Biliktu da-Lama Rabdan and Assistant Minister General and Manlai Caatyr Bei-Tzu Damdinsurun.

Plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, Sovereign of Tibet: Gujir tsanshib Kanchen Lubsan - Agwan Choinzin, Tshichamtso, manager of the Bank of Tibet, and Gendun-Galsan, secretary.

According to the Mongolian chronology, on the 4th day of the 12th month of the second year of "Him who is exalted by all."

According to the chronology of Tibet, in the year of the Water-mouse, on the same month and day.

CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE RUSSIANS INTO MONGOLIA

IN the seventeenth century Mongolia, or rather Urga, was already known to the Russians commercially. In the reign of Tsar Alexis two Russian officials, Ivan Potaboff and Gerofei Zablazski, were sent by the Russian Government to investigate the trade conditions and make a report on the same with a view to helping Russian enterprise in that direction. In their report they gave glowing details of trade possibilities in North Mongolia, but unfortunately one of these men was murdered by Mongols, as far north as Lake Baikal. It was from 1650 that Russian commercial and diplomatic Missions made a short cut to Peking by journeying via Urga and across the Gobi Desert. These Missions broke their journey at Urga, and were received by the Hu-tuk-tu with great ceremony. The commercial Missions took the opportunity of pushing trade during their stay in North Mongolia, and in 1727 a definite decision of frontiers at

Minister of Justice M. Eltekor | Minister of Interior | H.E. M. Korostovetz, Russian Plenipotentiary | Prince Sain Noin, President of the Mongolian Cabinet | M. Louba, Russian Consul General at Urga | Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Popoff | Minister of War | Minister of Finance

GROUP OF RUSSIAN AND MONGOLIAN OFFICIALS TAKEN AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE RUSSO-MONGOL AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL AT URGA IN NOVEMBER, 1912

(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

Kiachta was arrived at. Even at that time the names of fifty Russian commercial houses are mentioned in a report as trading with Mongolia. Later it was found necessary to protect Russian trade and traders, and the Russian Government therefore appointed special Commissioners with a staff of secretaries and interpreters to stay at Urga. Russia's inroad into Mongolia had begun, and in 1858, by the Treaty of Aigun, a Russian Consulate was established at Urga, and Russia had obtained her definite stand in Mongolian territory.

During the later years of Peter the Great's reign Commissioners were attempting, on their journeys to Peking via Urga, to disseminate Christianity. It is on record that Peter the Great instructed the Metropolitan Bishop of Tobolsk to try to induce the Hu-tuk-tu at Urga to become a Christian. It was a bold move in the interests of Christianity—or could it have been political intrigue?—to seriously ask the most venerated of the Buddhist Lamas of Mongolia, the Patriarch of the Halhar tribes, with thousands of fanatical followers, the very reincarnation of the historian "Taranatha Lama," who translated the Buddhist Gospel into the Mongol tongue, the third living Buddha of that faith, to change his religion to Christianity. The Metropolitan Telophe obeyed the instructions of

his Tsar, Peter the Great, and sent missionaries to the Hu-tuk-tu, who represented the advantages that would accrue to him in embracing the faith of the Orthodox Church of Russia. He was offered presents, amongst which was a sceptre to bless all his new converts,—as they confidently expected that once they had caught the Hu-tuk-tu his followers would without further trouble embrace the new faith. History relates that these missionaries were received in a very friendly manner by the Hu-tuk-tu, who gave them the benefit of an official Lama service and a brilliant reception. He sent back his best thanks to the Metropolitan, but returned him his presents, diplomatically informing him that although he himself felt inclined to become a Christian, the corporates of Lamas, fearing to lose their income and influence in introducing a new religion, had started intrigues, which made his acceptance of the new religion impossible.

Another attempt to convert the Hu-tuk-tu was made by the same Metropolitan in 1719, but again the mission was unsuccessful. Russia kept on friendly terms with the Mongol princes; and even at this early period her future policy of advancement must have been kept well in view. Russians were sent to Mongolia with a view to learning the Mongol tongue, and Russian merchants traded

quite amicably with the Mongols, and the tea-carrying trade from China was in Russian hands.

In 1881 the St. Petersburg Treaty was signed by Russia and China. This treaty, as well as dealing with the re-establishment of Chinese authority in Ili, dealt with certain trade and frontier conditions in Mongolia.

To the west of Mongolia, Russia was following her usual policy of advance towards the borders of Afghanistan, and during this period had met with practically no resistance. In Manchuria, to the east of Mongolia, she was endeavouring to obtain an ice-free port at Port-Arthur, on the shores of the Pacific, but met with a severe rebuff in that disastrous war with Japan in 1904–5. She had underestimated the strength of the East, she had overestimated her own preparedness for war. Certainly she paid her penalty, not so much, perhaps, in her temporary check in Manchuria, as by the great loss of prestige to herself amongst the Eastern nations. But she learnt her lesson. Her army underwent a general re-organisation. Transbaikalia, which was almost empty of troops before the Japanese War, was afterwards filled. The doubling of the Trans-Siberian Railway was set on foot. Russia began to watch with interest the awakening of China. The increase of the Chinese army trained

on modern lines was sufficient to make her think of Japan's rapid military development. It was essential for her to obtain a buffer state between herself and China. By 1909–10 these sentiments were almost openly expressed. Certainly they were on the lips of more than one of her great Eastern Diplomats.

In 1910–11 Russia commenced to press China to a consent of renewal in modified terms of this treaty of 1881. But the Chinese Government would not acquiesce, and negotiations continued to be spun out indefinitely. Russia backed up her request by dispatching a division of troops from Transbaikalia down the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Chinese gave in and little was heard of this episode, but her action here showed her hand. She intended to brook no interference from China. Profiting by her experience at the hands of Japan, she did not mean to wait until China was strong enough to back her word by force. Japan barred her way temporarily in Manchuria. China was not to be allowed to prevent her wishes in Mongolia from being materialised. Then came Russia's, and perhaps it may be Mongolia's, stroke of luck, the outbreak in October 1911 of the Chinese Revolution—a Revolution that perhaps was half expected by many who knew of the enormous strength of the *Kuo-Ming-tang* society. China was harassed by

her internal troubles ; her troops, even if they had been ready for use, were fully occupied here, there, and everywhere in China itself.

In August 1912 the Russian Government informed China that, as China refused to negotiate the Revision of the Treaty, she, Russia, had no other course but to consider the Agreement of 1881 as remaining in force for another ten years. Russia, however, was ready to abolish the duty-free zone of fifty versts on the Russian side of the frontier as from 14th January 1913, and would have no objection to a simultaneous abolition of the privileges in vogue on the Chinese side. Prior to this, dissatisfaction in Urga had arisen amongst the Mongols against the Chinese Government, and especially against the Chinese officials in N. Mongolia. Previous appeals to the Peking Government had met with no redress and but little response. In July 1911 the Hu-tuk-tu took matters into his own hands. He presided over a meeting of certain influential Mongol princes, and at this meeting it was resolved to seek the Tsar's protection. A deputation of Mongol princes was dispatched to St. Petersburg, and arrived there in August 1911. The deputation was officially received, and returned to Urga with the assurance that Russia would make representations to Peking.

The position was, however, a difficult one. Here was the nominal vassal of a neighbouring power applying to Russia for protection. Russia's sympathies were with the Mongols. It was her policy to take this opportunity of consolidating her influence in Mongolia, and at the same time appearing as the protector of the Mongols. Accordingly she informed the Chinese Government that she would not allow harsh measures to be taken against Mongolia, and proposed a *modus vivendi* based on the following conditions :—

(1) Conservation of inner *status quo* in Mongolia.

(2) No admission of Chinese colonists.

(3) No Chinese garrison to be stationed in Halhar (Outer Mongolia).

The Chinese declined to accept these conditions, and in November the Mongols declared their independence and abolished the Chinese Government in Urga ; the Amban San To (the Chinese administrator) and the Chinese officers fled for protection to the Russian Consulate. At the same time the Mongols applied again to Russia for money, arms, and diplomatic intervention. Russia deemed it expedient to resume once more her attempt to establish an arrangement between Mongolia and China. In this attempt she repeated her previous

demands, and the Republican Government of China, which had by now established itself at Peking, rejected them. Russia thenceforth advised China that she would negotiate direct with the newly established Mongol Government. In September 1912 she sent a special Plenipotentiary, M. Korostovetz, to negotiate with the Mongols direct at Urga. The pourparlers with the Hu-tuk-tu and his ministers resulted in the signing of a Political Convention and Commercial Treaty called the Protocol (to be found in Appendix A).

An official communiqué issued by the Russian Government embodies the Government views of the situation, and gives the Agreement and Protocol in detail. A translation of this communiqué is given below.

"Since the communication made to the State Duma by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 13th April 1912,[1] concerning the aims pursued by Russian policy in Outer Mongolia, the efforts of our diplomacy have been directed to obtaining from the Chinese Government an engagement to respect the native constitution of that country.

"As stated in the above-mentioned communication of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Russian

[1] The dates quoted are according to the Russian calendar, which is twelve days behind the European.

Government suggested to the Chinese three conditions which, in its opinion, would guarantee the inviolability of this constitution,—viz., that the Chinese Government should abstain from introducing Chinese administration into the country, from quartering Chinese troops in it, and from colonising it with Chinese.

"The Chinese Government was, however, unwilling to consider the above-mentioned proposals made by the Russian Government, whilst the Government formed at Urga expressed no intention of being reconciled to the replacement of the Imperial authority in China by a Republican form of Government.

"Along with this, the Russian Government, finding that the Chinese Government could not or would not come to terms as to the revision of the Russo-Chinese Commercial Treaty of 1881, considered itself entitled to inform China that the said treaty must be considered as remaining in force for a new term of ten years, *i.e.* until 1921.

"This raised the question of the rights which Russian trade and Russian subjects were to enjoy in Mongolia, where the authority of China was practically replaced by that of the Urga Government.

"In view of the above circumstances, Actual State Councillor Korostovetz was dispatched to Urga in September of the current year to settle the con-

THE RUSSIAN PLENIPOTENTIARY—H.E. MONSIEUR J. KOROSTOVETZ—GREETED ON HIS ARRIVAL AT URGA IN SEPTEMBER, 1912, BY THE RUSSIAN COLONY, MONGOL PRINCES AND CABINET MINISTERS

(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

THE RUSSIAN PLENIPOTENTIARY—H.E. MONSIEUR J. KOROSTOVETZ—GREETED ON HIS ARRIVAL AT URGA IN SEPTEMBER, 1912, BY THE RUSSIAN COLONY, MONGOL PRINCES AND CABINET MINISTERS

(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

ditions which were to determine the relations of Russia to the practically autonomous Government of Mongolia, and the commercial rights of Russian subjects in the territory over which the authority of the said Government extends. The result of M. Korostovetz's negotiations with the Mongolian Government was the signature by him at Urga on 21st October 1912, together with the Mongolian Plenipotentiaries, of an Agreement according to which the Russian Government promises the Mongols its support for the protection of the autonomy proclaimed by them and expressed in the right of not admitting Chinese administration on their territory, of supporting a national army, of not admitting Chinese troops, or permitting the colonisation of Mongolian lands by Chinese.

"On its side the Mongolian Government undertakes not to conclude treaties in contravention of these principles, and to allow Russian subjects in Mongolia to enjoy their former rights.

"The Russo-Mongolian Agreement of 21st October 1912 is an act acknowledging an autonomous Mongolian Government, with which the Russian Government henceforth establishes direct relations. This Agreement, however, does not decide the question of the relations of autonomous Mongolia to China. Should the Chinese Government acknow-

ledge the principles on which it is based, the Russian Government will have no reason to prevent the establishment between China and the Mongols of an Agreement as to the conditions on which the latter might acknowledge the suzerainty of China." (Here follows the Imperial Decree announcing the Agreement.)

"*December* 19, 1912.

"IMPERIAL DECREE PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE MONGOLIAN GOVERNMENT.

"By an advice dated December 8th, 1912, the Minister of Foreign Affairs notified the Minister of Justice that, by consent of His Majesty, Actual State Councillor Korostovetz had signed at Urga, on October 21st, 1912, together with the Plenipotentiaries of Je-tsun Dampa Hu-tuk-tu, the Mongolian Government, and the Mongolian ruling princes, an Agreement and a Protocol.

"Wherefore the Minister of Justice, on the 13th day of December 1912, presented the said documents to the Senate for publication.

"THE AGREEMENT

"In view of the publicly declared desire of the Mongols to retain the ancient national

constitution of their land, all Chinese troops and authorities have been removed from the territory of Mongolia and Je-tsun Dampa Hu-tuk-tu has been proclaimed Sovereign of the Mongol people.

"The former relations of Mongolia to China have thus come to an end. Now, in view of the above, and likewise of the ancient mutual friendship existing between the Russian and the Mongol nations, and in view of the necessity of precisely determining the order of Russo-Mongol trade, Actual State Councillor Ivan Korostovetz on behalf of the Russian Imperial Government;

"Sain Noin Khan (of) Namnansurun, President of the Mongolian Council of Ministers, Patron of 10,000 truths;

"Chin-Suzuletu Tsin-van Lama Tsyrenchimed, Minister of the Interior;

"Erdeni-deitzin Khan (of) Dergi, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

"Erdeni-Dalai Dzun-van, Duke of Gombosum, Minister of War;

"Tu She tu Dzun-van, Duke of Chakdorgab, Minister of Finance, and

"Erdeni-Dzun van, Duke of Namsarai, Minister of Justice, being empowered by the Sovereign of the Mongol people, by the Mongol Government

and the ruling princes, have agreed on the following :—

"1. The Imperial Russian Government will give its aid to Mongolia in order that Mongolia may retain the autonomous constitution instituted by her, and also the right of having her own national troops and of refusing to allow Chinese troops or Chinese colonisation in its territory.

"2. The Sovereign of Mongolia and the Mongolian Government will permit Russian subjects and Russian trade to enjoy, as before, the rights and privileges enumerated in the Protocol below. It is understood that other foreign subjects will not be granted any more rights in Mongolia than are enjoyed there by Russian subjects.

"3. Should the Mongolian Government consider it necessary to enter into any separate treaty with China or any other foreign state, the new treaty may in no case infringe or alter the clauses of the present Agreement and Protocol without the consent of the Imperial Russian Government.

"4. The present Agreement of friendship is to come into force from the date of signature.

"In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries, having found, on comparing the parallel texts of the present Agreement in Russian

and in Mongolian prepared in two copies, that the said texts agree with one another, have signed each of them, affixed their seals, and interchanged the said texts.

"Concluded at Urga on the 21st day of October 1912, and, according to the Mongolian system of chronology, in the second year of the reign of 'Him who is exalted by all' on the 24th day of the last month of Autumn.

(Signed and sealed by the Mongolian Signatories.)

(Signed and sealed by Ivan Korostovetz, the Russian Plenipotentiary.)"

The Chinese being informed of this Agreement declined to recognise its value, insisting on their sovereign rights over Mongolia, and the impossibility of Mongolia entering into any sort of agreement without her sanction. At the same time China began to assemble troops on the border of Inner Mongolia at Kalgan, Moukden, Kwan-cheng-tze, Hailar and Tsi-Tsi-har, advancing also from Urumtsi in the province of Sin-Kiang towards Uliassutai and Kobdo. The Mongols, on their side, made warlike preparations, sending troops to the borders of Outer Mongolia.

CHAPTER II

RUSSO-CHINESE NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING MONGOLIA

IN December 1912 the Mongols sent a mission to St. Petersburg to express their gratitude for the conclusion of the Agreement, and for the support afforded by Russia.

The leader of this mission was Prince Han Daradji, Minister of Foreign Affairs, assisted by Prince Shesnine Damdin and several minor officials. They were received in audience by the Tsar, and offered him presents consisting of ponies, silk, and jade, etc. Afterwards they visited Moscow, where they were officially received and entertained by the Chamber of Commerce, and were given every opportunity of discussing commercial possibilities in Mongolia.

The political result of the mission was the official confirmation by Russia of her promises to help Mongolia.

Early in 1913 the Russian Government, wishing to come to an amicable arrangement with a view to

PRINCE HAN-DA-VAN, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
LEADER OF EMBASSIES TO ST. PETERSBURG IN 1911 AND 1912
(From a photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostowetz)

preserving her old friendship with China, and in deference to public opinion, again renewed negotiations at Peking. She proposed to recognise China's sovereignty over Mongolia, on condition that Mongol autonomy and self-government were recognised. These negotiations appeared to meet with every prospect of success, and in April 1913 the two countries succeeded in elaborating an understanding embodying six conditions which were sufficiently satisfactory to both sides. These six conditions translated from the French text were as follows :—

"With the object of in future removing the misunderstanding which the present situation in Mongolia might engender, Russia and China have agreed to conclude an Agreement on the following terms :—

"1. Recognising that Mongolia forms an integral part of the territory of China, Russia promises not to seek to dissolve this bond, and to respect the historical rights accruing therefrom to China.

"2. China agrees not to modify the historical autonomy of Outer Mongolia, and to give to the Mongols of Outer Mongolia, who are responsible for the defence and maintenance of order in their territory, the exclusive rights of maintaining their own military and police

organisation, as well as the right of not allowing the colonisation on their lands of other people than Mongolian subjects.

"3. Russia on her side promises not to send troops into Outer Mongolia, with the exception of Consular Guards, not to undertake the colonisation of the territory of Outer Mongolia, and not to be represented in that country by any other institution than the Consulates allowed by the treaties.

"4. China, desirous of using peaceful methods in the exercise of her authority over Outer Mongolia, declares herself prepared to accept the good offices of Russia to establish on the above basis the principle of her relations with Outer Mongolia, so that the central authority of this region should recognise its historical character as a local authority of a part of China.

"5. In consideration of the good offices of the Russian Government, the Chinese Government consent to confer on Russian subjects in Outer Mongolia the commercial advantages enumerated in the following article (as stated in Protocol concluded at Urga).

"6. All international acts concerning modifications to be brought to bear on the system of government established in Outer Mongolia, which might later be concluded by the Russian Government with the authorities of that country, will only be valid in so far as they will have

been approved by the Chinese Government as a result of direct negotiations between China and Russia."

The understanding recognised China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia, and at the same time preserved some sort of inner self-government. The Mongol Ministers, who were watching these negotiations with great suspicion and distrust, lodged a petition simultaneously in Peking and St. Petersburg, and asked to be represented as being the party vitally concerned in the question. Meantime the six conditions were submitted to the House of Representatives at Peking in May, but after protracted discussion, and after a vote by a majority in favour of ratification, the Senate, owing to the preponderating influence of the *Kuo-Ming-tang* Party, refused to endorse the Russian proposals. Seeing that there was no possibility of reaching an understanding, Russia declared to China that she could not continue negotiations in the same strain. Accordingly, in July 1913, she submitted a new basis of negotiation, embodying much harsher terms, as given hereunder :—

"1. China shall recognise the autonomy of Mongolia (excluding the territory which forms Inner Mongolia).

"2. Russia recognises the suzerainty of

China over Mongolia, and the rights appertaining thereto.

"3. China declares herself ready to accept Russia's good offices to establish relations with the Mongolian Government, adopting as a basis the principles enumerated in the Agreement and Protocol between Russia and Mongolia, dated October 21, 1912.

"4. Questions which affect Russian and Chinese interests in Mongolia, and which are created by the new situation in this country, shall be the subject of future negotiations between the two Governments."

At this time, moreover, a Government Communiqué was also published in which Russia explained her view on the Mongol situation, and the manner in which she considered that the question ought to be treated.

On 30th June 1913 the Russian Minister in Peking, in the name of the Imperial Government, made the following communication to the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs: "When beginning negotiations on the Mongolian question the Imperial Government gave the Chinese Government definitely to understand that it would base these negotiations on the principles established by the Russo-Mongolian Agreement and the Protocol of 1912, namely: The retention of the juridical bond

between China and Mongolia, and the securing to the latter, on the basis of the national union attained by it, of complete autonomy, and in particular the right of maintaining its own administration and its own army, and of not permitting the colonisation of its lands by Chinese.

"Since that time we have repeatedly pointed out that we cannot revert from these principles, both because we are convinced that it is only through their observation that the Mongolian question will cease to be a source of misunderstanding between Russia and China, and also because we are bound by all engagements to Mongolia to guarantee her the said privileges.

"While ready to make great concessions to the wishes of China with regard to the form of the treaty in process of elaboration, we have unceasingly emphasised that such alterations cannot, from our point of view, touch the essence of the Agreement, which remains inviolable.

"It is with regret that we have been convinced by the course of the negotiations that the Chinese Government takes a totally different view of the matter, and contemplates imparting a different meaning to the treaty by means of textual alterations.

"Very characteristic in this respect is, for

instance, its insistence on the elimination from the text of the treaty of all reference to central authority, as applied to higher organs of the Mongolian administration, under the pretext that this expression, when translated into Chinese, may furnish grounds for misunderstanding.

"The baselessness of this contention, in view of the primary importance of the French text, is evident, and, as it appears from the explanations between the Plenipotentiaries, this textual emendation was intended to reduce Mongolia to her former state of an aggregation of separate disunited principalities, and to abolish the unifying authority of the Hu-tuk-tu and the Council of Ministers.

"The incompleteness of the statements of the Chinese Government has led to the complete misinterpretation by the public opinion of China of the true significance of the projected treaty, taking it to mean an almost absolute restoration of China's sovereignty over Mongolia.

"This erroneous conviction has found expression in Parliament and in the Press; the Chinese Government, furthermore, considered it possible to inform the Russian Plenipotentiary of such claims as the forbidding of colonisation of Mongolian lands by any but Mongols and Chinese, the subordination of the Mongolian troops to Chinese officers, and so forth,

after the text of the corresponding articles, to the opposite effect, had already been decided on.

"An agreement including such a great sphere of questions of the first importance, as that of Mongolia does, can attain its ends only if both parties to it understand its general spirit and meaning in the same way; since, basing one's arguments on individual expressions and words, one may with equal success arrive at totally different conclusions as to individual provisions, if the fundamental ideas are not kept in view.

"It is therefore to be feared that when matters come to the practical application of the Agreement, important disagreements will arise between the parties to it, upon almost every point.

"Under such conditions the moment of signing the treaty, which is expected to forestall all future misunderstandings, threatens to become the beginning of disagreements of a more acute nature.

"The Imperial Government therefore, declining to entertain the latest proposals of China as to certain textual alterations, is obliged to acknowledge, with sincere regret, that the negotiations have not led to the desired results, and reassumes its liberty of action in this question.

"The Imperial Government, nevertheless, affirms in the most positive manner that, in principle, it in

no wise repudiates the arrangement of the disputed question, and is ready to renew the negotiations immediately, if only it receives an assurance that the views of Russia and China on the methods of solving the Mongolian question coincide in their main features, and give hope of the possibility of a practical delimitation of their respective interests in the matter.

"In the opinion of the Imperial Government, this end would best be served by an interchange of communications defining the conclusive point of view of the two States on the conduct of the question.

"The main contents of these communications might be summed up as follows :—

"1. China acknowledges the autonomy of Mongolia (with the exception of the districts forming Inner Mongolia), and the rights ensuing from such autonomy for the said country.

"2. Russia acknowledges the suzerainty of China over Mongolia, and the rights involved in such suzerainty.

"3. China expresses her readiness to accept the good offices of Russia for the establishment of her mutual relations with the Mongolian Government, the basis being the principles expressed in the Russo-Mongolian Agreement and the Protocol of October 21st, 1912.

"4. Questions touching the interests of Russia

and China in Mongolia, and arising from the new state of affairs in that country, shall be the subject of subsequent discussion by the respective Governments.

"In conclusion, the Imperial Government consider it its duty to point out that, until some agreement or other has been concluded with China, it will determine its relations to Mongolia, as hitherto, exclusively according to the agreements concluded with the latter as well as according to the principles arising from these agreements."

As a result the Chinese Government appeared to manifest a desire to negotiate with the Urga Government a settlement on the lines of the new proposals and matters were carried a step further, as the following telegrams from Peking and St. Petersburg show :—

"ST. PETERSBURG, *Sept.* 26.—A telegram from Peking states that the new Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs has renewed negotiations with the Russian Minister with a view to the conclusion of a threefold treaty between Russia, China, and Mongolia on the basis of the recognition of the independence of a united Mongolia under the rule of a Hu-tuk-tu, subject to the suzerainty of China." —*Reuter.*

"PEKING, *Sept.* 26.—On October 3rd another mission will leave Urga for St. Petersburg, consist-

ing of the Premier Sain Noin Khan, Prince Wutai, and also the representatives of the Foreign and Home Offices. The visit is expected to have an important effect on Mongolia's future, particularly in view of the recent reaction in Mongolia towards renewing Chino-Mongol friendship. The powerful Prince Na recently surrendered to the Chinese with numerous followers, and it is reported that other leaders intend to do likewise. Russia has advanced to the Mongolian Government two million roubles, all of which has been paid over. The Russians, who have been deputed to do so by the Russian Consul in Kobdo, are now collecting these revenues."—*Reuter.*

From the above it appeared obvious that a satisfactory conclusion of the negotiations was in sight, and on 23rd October the *Times* Correspondent at Peking telegraphed :—

"The Russian Minister and the Chinese Foreign Minister to-day practically reached an agreement on the terms of the declarations with regard to Mongolia, which will be exchanged by the two Powers. The declarations will embody the principles involved in the Urga Convention, and will secure to Russia the privileges set forth in the Protocol accompanying the Convention. Chinese suzerainty will be acknowledged on the Russian side, and on the other China agrees to recognise the autonomy of Mongolia and to refrain from colonisation or military occupation.

WU-TAI, PRINCE OF CHERIM. MEMBER OF PRINCE SAIN NOIN'S MISSION TO ST. PETERSBURG, NOVEMBER, 1913

His Principality was devastated by the Chinese, and he, with his family, sought the Hu-tuk-tu's protection at Urga

(Photograph lent by M. Korostovetz)

"The knotty point of the geographical definition of autonomous Mongolia, as well as other important matters, remains for discussion at the three-cornered conference which it has been decided to hold forthwith at Kiachta. While China now appears prepared to accept the 'fait accompli' in Mongolia, there still remains a wide gulf between Russian and Chinese ideas of the regions to which the new arrangement applies, and long outdrawn negotiations at Kiachta may be expected."

The Agreement foreshadowed in the above telegram was actually signed at Peking on the 5th November. On the same date Yuan Shih Kai, the President of the Chinese Republic, issued a dramatic and drastic mandate ordering the dissolution of the *Kuo Ming-tang*, formerly the strongest political party in the Republic, the dismissal of all the members of the *Kuo Ming-tang* from Parliament, and the election of new Deputies not members of the *Kuo Ming-tang*. All who supported the *Kuo Ming-tang* were to be treated as rebels, and orders were given to the central and provincial authorities to proceed against them. The mandate enumerated the alleged offences of the *Kuo Ming-tang*.

Seeing that it was the attitude of the *Kuo Ming-tang* that was responsible for the rejection of the Russian proposals earlier in the summer, this strong action on the part of the President was significant, and

shows that he intends to meet Russian views regarding Mongolia. The terms of the Russo-Chinese Agreement regarding Mongolia, as telegraphed by Reuter, are as follows :—

"The Russian Government having formulated the principles constituting the basis of its relations with China regarding Outer Mongolia, and the Chinese Government having signified its approval thereof, the two Powers agree as follows :—

"1. Russia recognises Outer Mongolia as being under the suzerainty of China.

"2. China recognises the autonomy of Outer Mongolia.

"3. Recognising the exclusive right of the Mongols of Outer Mongolia to administer their internal affairs and to settle all commercial and industrial questions concerning autonomous Mongolia, China will not maintain there either civil or military officials, and will abstain from all colonisation,—it being understood, however, that a dignitary sent by the Chinese Government can reside in Urga, accompanied by the requisite subordinate staff and an escort. Also China may station in certain localities of Outer Mongolia, to be arranged subsequently, agents for the protection of the interests of her subjects. Russia, in turn, undertakes not to maintain troops in Outer Mongolia, with the exception of Consular

guards, nor to interfere with the administration, and to refrain from colonisation.

"4. China will accept the good offices of Russia to establish her relations with Outer Mongolia conformably with the above principles and the stipulations of the Convention of Urga concluded between Russia and Mongolia on November 3, 1912.

"5. Questions regarding the interests of China and Russia in Outer Mongolia arising from the new conditions will form the subject of subsequent negotiations.

"The Notes exchanged are to the following effect:—

"1. Russia recognises that the territory of Outer Mongolia forms part of Chinese territory.

"2. In any negotiations regarding political and territorial questions between the Chinese and Russian Governments, the authorities of Outer Mongolia will participate.

"3. All three parties will participate in the negotiations referred to in Article 5 of the Declaration and designate the place of meeting.

"4. Autonomous Outer Mongolia will comprise the regions formerly under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Amban at Urga, the Tartar General at Uliassutai, and the Chinese Amban at Kobdo; but since no detailed maps

exist and the boundaries are uncertain, it is agreed that the frontier of Outer Mongolia, together with the boundaries between Kobdo and the Altai Mountains, shall be the subject of negotiations as provided in Article 5 of the Declaration."

It should be added that, several times during these negotiations of 1912–13, the Chinese attempted to negotiate with the Mongols. Their wish was that Mongolia should join the Republic, and letters and telegrams were constantly being exchanged on this subject. In every case the Mongols refused, alleging that they had nothing to do with the Chinese Republic. Their personal relations and allegiance had been rendered to the Manchu dynasty, and with the overthrow of that dynasty all bonds were severed. The Chinese replied that they were of opinion that the Mongols owed allegiance to the Government of China, and not to the Manchu dynasty. China pointed out the danger of Mongolia accepting Russian protection, and instanced the fate that had overtaken Korea and Bokhara.

The Mongols are not by any means unanimous in their pleasure at the conclusion of the treaty. The princes are some of them hard hit by the withdrawal of the subsidies which they used to

receive from the Peking Government. Now they have to obey the central Mongol Government at Urga, which is nearer at hand than Peking, and is more exacting in its requirements.

More revenue is required to meet the expenses involved by the upkeep of an army in the field, consequently extra taxation has to be enforced. Needless to say, this taxation is unpopular amongst all classes of society.

The Mongols are beginning to find out, too, that government by their own countrymen is more severe and harsh than it was under the old regime.

The withdrawal of Chinese merchants is another blow, as the Russians are unable to adequately replace them.

The Mongols hoped to receive full independence, and are not satisfied merely with internal autonomy. They expected the whole of Mongolia to come under the Hu-tuk-tu's sway, and are dissatisfied and disgusted at the attitude assumed by the Inner Mongolians, who, for the most part, remained loyal to the Chinese Republic.

They also would like to have an accredited representative at St. Petersburg, and to have the Russian representative at Urga called a Minister, and not Consul-General. The Russians have partly acceded to the last named request, and their present

representative at Urga, Mr. Miller, is styled Diplomatic Agent.

Thus we find the country of Mongolia desired by two great empires,—one European the other Asiatic. A race now dwindled to some 2,000,000 souls, the remnant of a vast empire, a cat's-paw for nations whom she herself had once conquered. Encroached upon, despised, almost effete, entirely priest-ridden. In this last word lies the cause of her decline—an ignominious state for a nation with such a history.[1]

[1] An account of the latest political developments since this book went to press will be found in the "Afterword" following the Appendices.

CHAPTER III

THE MONGOL RACE—HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL

THE ancient Mongol race have exerted for centuries an important influence over the destinies of Eastern and Southern Asia. Their early history is very obscure.

In antiquity these Mongols or Moghuls were known by the name of Scythians, and as early as the Decline of the Roman Empire their tribes sought for more fertile regions.

It was the "Huns" who first reached the frontier of Italy, and it is from this tribe that the modern Mongol is descended.

The name of the Mongols is first mentioned by Chinese historians in the ninth century of our era. According to these historians, the Mongols were at that time divided into a number of tribes, each under the rule of its own Prince; these tribes or clans were in the habit of waging petty wars with one another; for greater undertakings, such as a war against China, they would sink their

little differences and combine under a common leader.

The history of the Mongols becomes of importance, in its effect on the world, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, between the years 1206 and 1227, when the son of a petty chieftain named Temuchin brought all the Mongol tribes under his authority, formed them into one nation, and proclaimed himself Grand Sovereign of Mongolia with the title of Jenghis Khan.

Jenghis Khan became the first ruler of a vast realm, which stretched from the China Sea to the banks of the Dnieper. It was an empire the most formidable ever established, and was gained solely by force of arms.

In 1227 he died whilst conducting a campaign in Central Asia, and the conquest of China was completed more than half a century later by his grandson Kublai Khan, who transferred the capital to Peking in 1264, and established the Yuan dynasty.

The splendour of Kublai's Court has been described by Marco Polo, who says that, "If you were to put together all the Christians in the world, with their Emperors and their Kings, the whole of these Christians—aye, and throw in the Saracens to boot—would not have such power, or be able

to do so much as this Kublai, who is the Lord of all the Tartars in the world."

Meanwhile the conquests begun by Jenghis Khan in the west were continued by his successors.

The Mongol hordes swept not only over China, but subjugated Persia, Hindustan, Russia, Poland, and Hungary, and turned back only at the gates of Vienna.

In their triumphant progress they forced the vanquished to march to further conquests under their new masters, and, taking every advantage of the disunion which existed amongst the states of Europe, penetrated through Poland into Silesia.

By the end of the thirteenth century, authority had been delegated to so many Khans that the empire itself broke up into several principalities. The Mongol yoke still remained over Russia until 1380, when the Golden Horde were defeated at the battle of Kalka by the Russians under the command of the Grand Duke Dimitri, surnamed Donskoi, in memory of this successful battle ;—and so at last the Russians had freed themselves from these Mongols. About the end of the fourteenth century the Mongols were expelled from the throne of China by the Ming dynasty, and the Mongol tribes then occupied a large tract of country in what is now known as Mongolia, Siberia, and

Russia. But these nomad tribes were now well on the wane. There was no cohesion amongst them, and each wandering tribe was ruled by its own Khan, only owning very nominal allegiance to the chief Khan. Constant internecine war had weakened them, and, although their country was large and formed the dividing country between Russia and China, neither China nor Russia had much to fear from them.

The Ming dynasty, in China, was driven out in 1616–43 by the Manchu Tartars. These Manchus founded the "Ching dynasty," which held sway over China and her three dominions, Tibet, Manchuria, and Mongolia, until recent times.

After the Mongols' expulsion from China the nomad tribes were ruled by their individual Khans. They owned nominal allegiance to their chief Khan; and before the death of the last of these princes, Dayam Tsuen Khan in 1543, directions were left by him that Mongolia was to be divided into nine parts, according to the number of his sons.

A period now ensued during which the country was split up, and suffered severely from internecine strife. The princes were at enmity with one another, and sought for support in China. Thus it came to pass that on the establishment of the Manchu

dynasty the princes of Southern or Inner Mongolia acknowledged the suzerainty of China and became tributaries to the Son of Heaven.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the whole of Southern Mongolia, the Ordos country, Alashan and Kokonor were in subjection to the Manchus. Northern Mongolia or Halhar alone remained independent, her four princes refusing to do obeisance to China.

At this time Northern Mongolia was continually at war with the tribes of Dzungaria. Towards the end of the seventeenth century these tribes combined under the leadership of an ambitious and warlike Prince—Galdau Boshoktu Khan—and defeated the Halhar princes of Northern Mongolia. The latter were now forced to apply for help to the Manchu Government of China.

In 1691, at a gathering of Mongol princes held at Dolonor, the Emperor of China, Kang Hsi, confirmed their internal privileges and their rights to hereditary authority, receiving in return an acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the Manchu dynasty. Having obtained this acknowledgment, the Manchu Government turned its attention to the enthralment of the Mongols. To this end they strengthened and developed the system of appanages, whereby controlling authorities were multiplied and subdivided

to an enormous extent; dissension amongst the princes was also encouraged.

The introduction of Buddhism, with its abstract principles, its visionary ideals, and its pursuit of virtue and truth, conduced in no small degree to suppress the idea of Mongolian nationality, and materially weakened any tendency that the Mongols might still have had for war or conquest.

The result of this action on the part of the Manchus was the complete transformation of what had formerly been a warlike people into a nation of peaceful nomads. The powers of their ancestors, their national ideals, and the former greatness of their land—all were forgotten.

The spiritual leadership of the Hu-tuk-tu was another factor that contributed largely to the disintegration and slackness of the nation. The introduction of this Living Buddha, whose election was ratified by the Dalai Lama of Tibet, was also largely instrumental in spreading Tibetan ideals and principles as regards religion, intellectual life, science, literature, and civilisation broadcast throughout the land.

Having subjugated the Mongols, the Chinese decided to allow them to retain their former mode of government by means of tribal chiefs. At the same time, it was essential that some form of military

conscription, in accordance with their own methods should be adopted. Accordingly each tribe was given a special banner, and was rated as a separate military unit or *hoshun*. The commanders of these *hoshun* were the tribal chiefs, who were styled *hoshun utsa sak*. The size and numbers of these tribes naturally varied in proportion to the possessions of the tribal chiefs—and this difference in numbers exists to the present day.

The *hoshuns* were subdivided into squadrons (*sumun*) of 150 warriors each, under a commander (*sumun tsanchin*). Six squadrons formed a regiment (*tsalan*), with a *tsalan tsanga* at its head.

In civil affairs the tribal chief remained the ruler of each tribe,—special officials called *tusalakchi* and *dzahirakchi* were appointed to assist the chief in civil and administrative matters. The police authority was entrusted to special elders called *darga*,—one to each ten yurts.

Having converted the Mongolian hereditary nobility into government officials, the Chinese gave the chiefs the title of prince. This title was accompanied by a special mark of distinction and a salary.

It was the policy of the Chinese to give the Mongols a certain amount of home rule, whilst retaining in their hands the supreme authority and control.

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The representative of Chinese authority in Mongolia (before the secession of the country and the proclamation of its independence in 1911) resided at Urga, Uliassutai, and Kobdo. Courts for deciding disputes between Chinese were called *tsargucheya*. The *chisa* or council was another court to which were referred questions arising between Mongols belonging to different principalities.

The declaration of independence and secession from China has led to the abolition of Chinese officials. The administrative organisation of the country has, however, in its main features remained the same.

According to information from Urga, the Mongols are contemplating a radical change in the present system of administration.

They find it too cumbersome, and not in accord with the present state of affairs. It is probable that Russian assistance will be invoked in order to remedy matters.

During Mongolia's period of subjection to China—for it can be called nothing less—the Mongol people suffered many forms of indifferent government and injustice. The Mongols were always irritated by the Chinese yoke, but were never strong enough to break themselves free from it. True, their living

Buddha, the Hu-tuk-tu, owing to his fanatical followers and considerable wealth, wielded some power even in Peking, but his position was always difficult with three elements to deal with—priests, princes, and Peking. Of late years Mongolia was virtually administered by Chinese officials. These officials were supposed to issue their proclamations conjointly with Mongolian princes, but as these princes did not even hold an official seal, their power was practically nil.

The Chinese had, by means of colonisation and various small commercial ventures, gradually encroached into Mongolia. Year by year they gained a little way, year by year the Mongols lost more of their common grazing grounds. The Chinese were employing their usual methods of peaceful subjection, and were gradually absorbing the country and its people.

Here, then, were the Mongols, a nation descended from warriors, a nation who by the sword had held and ruled great empires, like some poor old soldier, his art of fighting gone, with no taste or experience of commerce or agriculture to take its place, compelled to accept the rule of its former vassal.

As one travels through their country one's thoughts fling back to modern civilisation, to

telephones, motor cars, tube railways, the hurry and stress of modern life, and one cannot help thinking that perhaps the Mongols have the better part. But modern civilisation, that great "Juggernaut," grinds on relentlessly ; and nations that will not, or cannot, join the procession must be ground beneath the feet of those that will.

Japan has learnt that lesson, China is awakening, but the fate of Mongolia is hanging in the balance.

Their country has now contracted to some one and a quarter million square miles, sparsely populated by nomads.

It is very difficult to arrive at the exact number of people living in Mongolia. The Mongols, being nomads, are constantly moving. The Government, however, estimates that the population of Outer Mongolia consists of 500,000 Mongols and 200,000 Chinese settlers. The Russian population in Outer Mongolia reaches 5000, and there are about 3000 settlers in the district of Altai. The population of Inner Mongolia is much higher.

The Inner Mongolians are more developed, more virile, and more progressive. Some hundreds of families have recently fled to Outer Mongolia, fearing Chinese military measures. These fugitives, more especially the Chahars, who come from the

district north of Kalgan, are not welcomed by their northern brothers.

Mongolia is divided geographically and politically into two great sections, Inner and Outer Mongolia. The former skirts the northern boundary of China, and for the most part its princes own allegiance to the Chinese Republic. Outer Mongolia, or Halhar, on the other hand, is the centre of the Hu-tuk-tu's sphere of influence. It consists of four big principalities :—

(1) Tse tsen Khan, subdivided into 23 petty principalities ;

(2) Tu She tu Khan, subdivided into 19 petty principalities ;

(3) Jassaktu Khan, subdivided into 23 petty principalities ;

(4) Sain Noin Khan, subdivided into 24 petty principalities,—making 89 petty principalities in all.

In the Tse tsen Khan principality is a stretch of land called "Darigangar," formerly used as Imperial pastures for cattle. The latter were sent as tribute to the Manchu Royal Family in Peking. Since the passing of the Manchus, the Mongols have ceased to pay this tribute, and claim the land as belonging to Halhar.

In the north-west extremity of Mongolia is the disputed district of Uriankhai, which the Mongols

wish the Russians to recognise as forming part of Mongolia. On the east side of this territory is Lake Kossogol, where there is a commercial town, Darhati, the centre of the cattle trade between Irkutsk and Uriankhai, where many Russian settlers live. There is another Russian colony at Hathyl, farther south. A Russian Frontier Commissioner resides at a town on the River Usu, a confluent of the Yenisei.

The Mongols have asked for reciprocity in trade, and to be allowed to open Consulates in Siberia, and the possibility of granting their demands is now under consideration by the Russian Government.

On the north-east of Mongolia is another district, that of Hulumbuiya or Barga, which forms part of the Chinese province of Heilung Kiang (N.W. Manchuria). This district is claimed by the Mongols to belong to Outer Mongolia, as they allege that the population inhabiting that area has always been Mongolian.

Mongolia's boundary to the north reaches as far as Siberia, in the west it is hedged in by Russian Turkestan, Dzungaria, that home of Chinese exiles, and Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan. To the east the great Khingan Mountains gradually sloping towards the sea divides Mongolia from Manchuria, and the north of China fills up the

gap on her southern boundary. This great upland of Mongolia, averaging 3000 feet above sea-level, is girdled by snow-capped mountains; within are fertile valleys, large rivers, rich mineral-bearing tracts, grassy steppes and sandy wastes.

Let us then enter Mongolia from China by its southern gate of Kalgan.

CHAPTER IV

KALGAN, THE SOUTHERN GATE OF MONGOLIA[1]

BEFORE the days of the Peking-Kalgan Railway, caravans across the Gobi Desert for Urga started from "Te-Sheng-men," one of the north gates of Peking. A traveller from Peking in those days could easily obtain any transport he required at Peking, whether camel or horses, and could have taken this transport direct to Urga without any change. Since the completion of the Peking-Kalgan Railway, but few caravans leave Peking direct for Urga. Goods for transit to Urga are railed to Kalgan, and from this place are transferred to camels or wheeled traffic. The traveller of to-day will therefore find some difficulty in making arrangements in Peking itself for transport, if he contemplates undertaking the desert journey, and if he be well advised he will make no attempt to do so. Packing his bed, baggage, and stores in the smallest possible space, and supplying

[1] Extracts from Captain Otter-Barry's Diary.

himself with Russian and Chinese money, for Russian money is the currency in Urga, he will probably board the train at the Hsi-chih-men railway station, and travel by this line to Kalgan station.

It was thus that I left Peking, which was beginning to get hot and dusty, on the 19th May 1911. I intended journeying viâ Kalgan, and across the Gobi Desert to Urga, and thence viâ Kiachta to Verhne-Udinsk station on the Trans-Siberian Railway, where I hoped to meet my wife on 12th July on board the wagons-lits train which was bringing her from England. The railway line from Peking to Kalgan threads its way over some 114 miles of hilly country, the gradient at its steepest being $3\frac{8}{10}$ per cent., as the Americans calculate. The railway is interesting, as it was entirely built by the Chinese,—a Chinese engineer, who had studied engineering in America, having constructed the line. I travelled as far as Kalgan with Colonel M. E. Willoughby, the then military attaché at Peking. A Chinese policeman met us on arrival at the Kalgan railway station, and requested us to write our names and business in a book he carried for the purpose.

We picked out the largest Chinese inn we could find, and, depositing our baggage there, sent our red

Chinese visiting cards to the Tartar General and Bureau of Foreign Affairs. The walls of my room were covered with traces of former travellers in the shape of farewells to the Flowery Land, which were scribbled all over them, and scrolls were hung up bidding good luck to travellers on their way. The population of Kalgan is roughly 100,000. The town is prettily situated, surrounded by hills some 6000 feet high, and it is divided by the River Yang, which flows north and south. In the summer time this river is nearly dry, and one would hardly have imagined that within a few months it could have carried such a terrific volume of water as to destroy the well-built stone bridge that joins the two portions of the town. This actually happened. There is a picturesque specimen of a walled city to the west side of the river, and to the north of it lie the barracks, the Tu-tung's or Tartar General's office, and the Bureau of Foreign Affairs; the chief commercial centre is outside the walled city to the north and south-east. The railway station is on the east side of the river, and a branch from here is being constructed to Kwei-hua-Cheng, a city to the west, which this railway will connect with Peking should the often talked of line across the Gobi Desert ever be constructed.

The railway to Urga will start from Kwei-hua-

Cheng, and this route would reduce the journey from Europe to Peking by four days.

A northern road traverses the city, which in its turn joins the main road along which the caravans to the north start. Along this broad stretch there are innumerable shops, where the traveller can purchase all sorts of necessaries and luxuries for his journey, such as saddles, harness, ropes, food, water-bottles, lanterns and other things far too numerous to mention. One can see the hurried traveller, having discovered previous omissions, running into these shops to make good his deficiencies before he leaves the land of plenty for the desert. The usual streets in Kalgan are narrow, and the roads in summer time abominably dusty; and if one wants to judge of the surface of the road one has only to drive half a mile in a Peking springless cart,—after that the average European would prefer to get out and walk.

The town itself is of very little commercial importance, but derives its prosperity from being a transfer station for goods from Kwei-hua-Cheng in the west, and merchandise coming and going across Mongolia, as all goods are transported to Kalgan railhead for China. Looking to the north of the town, one sees the huge gap in the surrounding hills through which the River Yang flows, and this gap

makes Kalgan's name of the southern gate of Mongolia very realistic.

The Tartar General of Kalgan had requested an interview with us. He is known as P'u-ta-jen, or in plain English P'u, the great man. We went to see him and he received us very courteously. He was a keen, intelligent-looking man, with a few straggling hairs for a moustache. He had the reputation of literally being a "tartar." He is a cousin of the little Emperor of China (since dethroned) and owed his appointment, which he lost after the Revolution, to his royal blood. P'u promised to help me in procuring transport for my journey, but when I explained to him that I intended crossing the desert by the telegraph route and not by the official route, he enforced the fact that he could not be responsible for my safety. However, the help in obtaining transport was all I wanted. He further told me that he was doing this as a favour to me, and other travellers must not expect it. He deputed Mr. Shen, his interpreter, to help me. I told him I intended meeting my wife at my journey's end in Siberia, and he was much amused and asked me to let him know when I met her.

After an interview we strolled with Mr. Shen through the Kalgan fair, on our way to lunch at the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. The fair was an

MY CHINESE SERVANT "LIU"

education in itself. The booths had all been set up in the courtyard of a temple, and overflowed to the road. Every conceivable article was for sale, from curios to block tea and Russian cloth. The fair in the temple rather reminded one of a familiar Bible story.

Most of the Europeans of the town had been collected to meet us at lunch, including the Russian postmaster and a member of the American Board Mission. Mr. Shen introduced me to an old Chinese merchant, who consented after some bargaining to hire me a cart, three horses, and a riding horse to go as far as Urga for 200 dollars. This old Chinese merchant had in the flourishing days of the tea trade been employed in carting tea from China to Russia. At the kind request of a representative of the British-American Tobacco Company we had transferred our quarters to his house, and so thither we returned. This large firm of tobacco merchants do a huge trade in China and its dependencies. Their representatives, both English and American, keep pressing on into the interior, forming branches for the sale of their cigarettes. Their method of obtaining trade, though simple, is unique. A European representative moves into a new district with a quantity of cigarettes, usually of the Peacock brand, and he gives these away

broadcast. It is usually not very long before the Chinaman is initiated into cigarette smoking. Then he will discard his pipe, and of course the agent has succeeded in creating a new district for the sale of his cigarettes. The company has quite an extraordinary knowledge of places not usually very accessible, and their agents know the country well, and are ever ready to help the European traveller on his way.

There are three routes across the Gobi Desert to Urga. The best known is the Government relay road, which runs west from Kalgan and then due north. This road is joined after a few hundred li[1] by a road running from Kwei-hua-Cheng, and at a small town called Sairussu sends off a branch to Uliassutai and Kobdo. The main route proceeds to Urga, and in order to use the ponies stationed at various stages it is necessary to have a special pass, which I had not got. I therefore decided to journey by the caravan, or telegraph route—seldom used by passengers, but the chief and most direct route for caravans. The third route is the one used by the bullock carts, and runs to the east, afterwards taking a great curve to the north-west. This route, though longer, has better grazing for the bullocks and more water. The Chinese postal

[1] 3 li = 1 English mile.

authorities farm out the carrying of their letters across the desert to a Mongolian, who knows month by month where to find Mongolian encampments, and rides for these to change horses. There are seven different forms of transport used—camel, camel-cart, ox-cart, horse-cart, pack-donkey, riding-horse, and palanquin carried by mounted men. The cost of and time taken by these varies in regard to the weight carried, season of the year, etc. The downhill trip from Urga to Kalgan is in every case cheaper than the uphill Kalgan to Urga journey.

I handed over half of the contract money for my equipage, and inspected the cart and horses. The cart was an ordinary Peking country cart without any springs or cover. It was an old one, but seemed fairly sound. The horses were miserable, and I had to stipulate for better animals. I made the acquaintance of my carter and future companion for the next four weeks. He was a surly-looking ruffian about fifty years old, hailing from Shansi province. He had never had anything to do with foreigners before, and treated me like a bit of human baggage, and viewed my natural anxiety as to the soundness of the wheels of the cart with disdain. Still, as this frail craft had to be my sole means of getting over some 600 or 700 miles

of desert, it seemed only natural one should at least make certain that it started fairly sound. The contractor told me that he would change the little 13-hand ponies for better ones, but no change could be made until he came to his farm 50 miles outside the Great Wall. The contractor agreed to form a covering of oiled cotton to the cart in order to make a watertight tent for me to sleep in, and he arranged that his son of eighteen years, as he spoke Pekinese, should form one of the caravan. My servant afterwards told me that the boy had only been married five days. Certainly he did not seem pleased at the prospect of two or three months' honeymoon without his wife.

That night I went to a farewell dinner at the Bureau of Foreign Affairs.

I was up early on the morning of the 23rd, hoping to get under weigh by 5.30 a.m. My movable hut, the cart, had a quaint appearance. I had the inside clear for my own possessions, but every other cubic inch was taken up with Kalgan peas for the horses, food for the men, and two water-barrels. At 8.0 a.m. four wretched cart horses and a woebegone riding horse arrived. I saddled the latter, and the carter hitched in the former with literally nothing but rope ends and a substantial saddle for the wheeler. One business-

MY CARAVAN

MY CARTER, AND MY CART

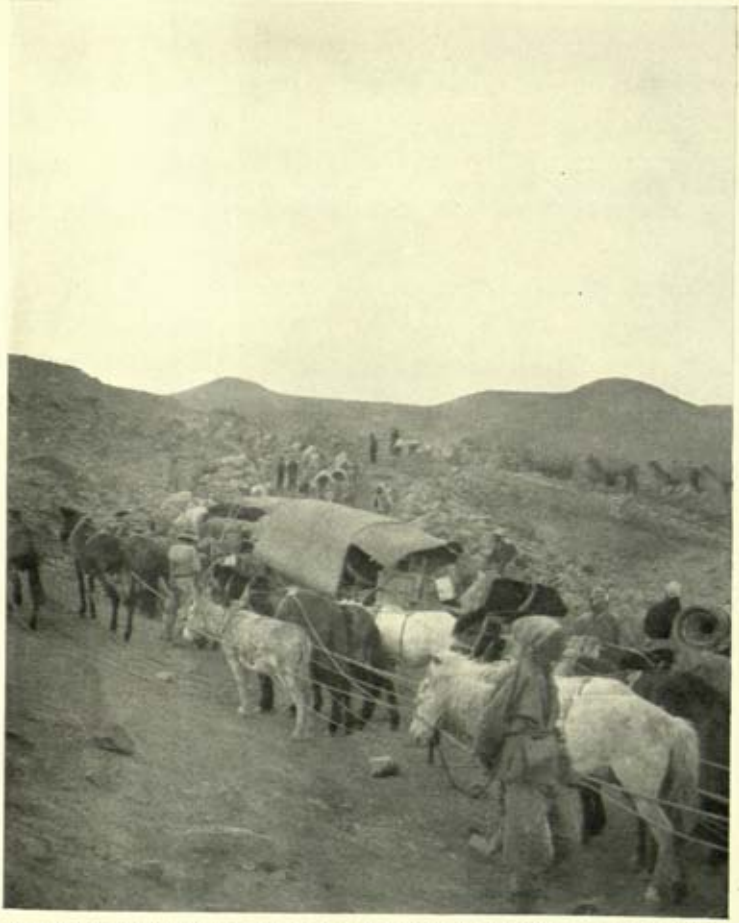
like whip was carried by the carter, and a smaller weapon slung outside the cart. A spade at the last moment was attached to one shaft. Liu, my Chinese servant, jumped up on a sack of Kalgan peas. The young grass widower seated himself on a shaft, I hoisted myself up on my skin and bones and, with much swearing and use of the whip, we lurched out of the ruts and began our journey over some 700 miles of desert for Urga.

CHAPTER V

ACROSS THE GOBI DESERT—KALGAN TO BANGKIANG[1]

23*rd May*.—It seemed rather like crossing the Pacific in a dinghy, and I remember making a mental prayer that the cart might keep together and that the ponies would not die—and leave us stranded. The old contractor and two policemen met us at the end of our lane, and accompanied us to the outskirts of the town; the latter, I felt sure, were relieved at getting rid of one foreigner off their hands. On the way out, as I expected, I remembered two things I had omitted to buy, a water-bottle and a lamp, and I hastened to rectify my forgetfulness by purchasing these along the road. The water-bottle, a skin one, was a distinct failure, the flavour of it was too much even when most thirsty; but the lamp was a joy, and even when two of the four glasses were broken, swung proudly from the roof of the cart. Outside the city we were hung up, waiting for another cart

[1] Extracts from Captain Otter-Barry's Diary.



"PICCADILLY CIRCUS" AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE MONGOLIAN PLATEAU

which was to cross in our caravan. I found it belonged to a representative of a large Chinese horse dealer and his satellites who were to meet us farther on our journey. One of the under-strappers was there to meet us, riding a stone-blind horse which turned out to be one of the best of the caravan and most sure-footed. These dealers were going over to Urga and its neighbour-hood to buy horses for sale in China. From outside the city the road runs in what appears to be a very stony dry river-bed, and can hardly be called a road at all. This river-bed bends in a most precipitous climb up to Han-no-pa, from which place the three desert roads branched. Here a wonderful collection of camels, carts, horses, donkeys, and every conceivable sort of transport had collected :—a perfect "jam" of traffic resulted, which took one's mind back more to Piccadilly Circus than the entrance to the Mongolian plateau. It only required a policeman to regulate it to make it realistic, but they dispensed with such a luxury and extricated themselves easily.

The distance between Han-no-pa and Kalgan is some 15 miles, and the difference in height 2400 feet, and I understood then why the engineers sent by the Chinese Government some years ago to survey this road with a view to building a

railway to Urga had decided on the route from Kwei-hua-Cheng instead of it.

At Han-no-pa we drove into the ample courtyard of a mud inn kept by Chinese, and one look at the crowded rooms decided me to sleep the night in the cart in the inn-yard. Washing was undergone with some publicity, and not a little amusement to the remainder of the travellers. A Mongol hardly ever washes, and the same will apply to the average Chinese on "trek," with the exception of the Chinese Mohammedan. To do the Chinese justice, they always clean their teeth, even if the remainder of their body goes dirty.

24th May.—We arrived in camp at night in drenching rain. My cart let in the water, and this in combination with the cold was not pleasant. The difference in temperature was perfectly surprising. When we left Kalgan it was uncomfortably hot; here it was disagreeably cold. We were passing through that portion of Inner Mongolia which has gradually year by year been colonised by the Chinese. Virtually this is nothing but encroachment on the Mongols' pasture-land. But the great tracts of ploughed land with growing crops of wheat and oats speak for the richness of the soil. Here and there in between the plough were strips of rough grass-land, and farther from the

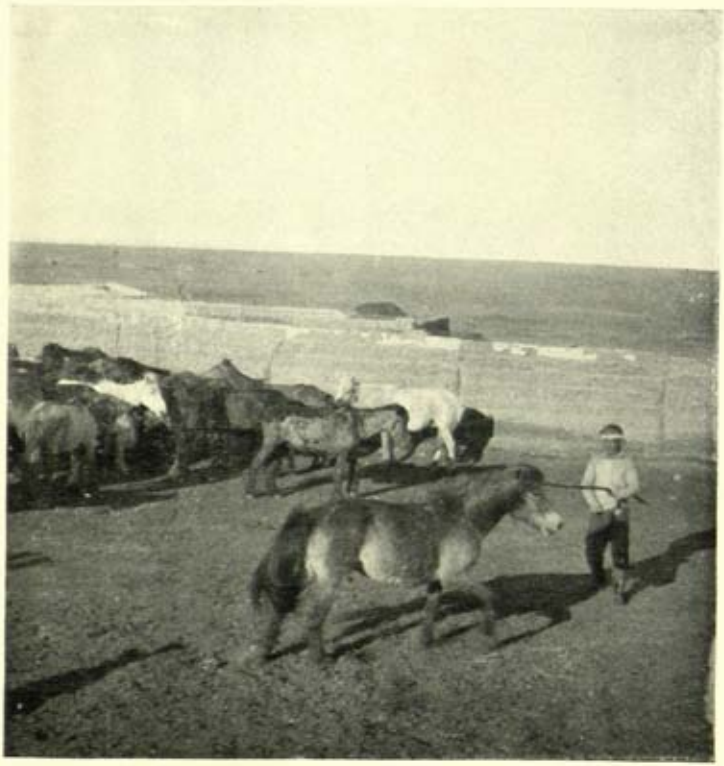
road one could see large tracts on which a few cattle and sheep and some miserable horses were grazing. The Chinese, though wonderful tillers of the ground, never seem to be able to look after their live stock. Here the houses of the Chinese colonists have sprung up into diminutive villages with a few shops amongst them, and an occasional tea-house or small inn. They are all made of mud in Chinese fashion.

25*th May*.—Next night we reached my carter's farm, after a cross-country journey over slightly undulating country away from road or even track. All this time the country showed signs of colonisation by the Chinese, with here and there a house and corral tucked in under shelter from the north wind. Our carter's house was typical of them all. It was a miserable building with a small horse corral attached to it and a few stables. It only possessed two living rooms, and the whole building was made of mud. I managed to possess myself of one of the rooms, and so spent a more comfortable night than was possible cramped up in the cart. I rode out with two of the Chinese to a troop of ponies they had grazing near by, and tried to choose a couple of decent ponies and a riding pony from the troop. There were about fifty or sixty wretched-looking nags. Eventually we managed to drive

the best of this bad lot into the corral, and then the trouble was to catch those we had picked out. The Mongol does this with an implement like a large carriage whip with the lash tied half-way down the stick, and they are usually fairly expert in its use, but Chinamen don't know how to handle it, with the consequence that it continually broke, landing the Chinese who held it flat on his back. Eventually we secured what we wanted with a rope, and let the others out. This was the last time for many a day that we could buy anything in the way of fresh provisions, and so I feasted on chicken and eggs.

26*th May*.—Three hours after leaving the contractor's house we passed the last Chinese settlements. In place of Chinese houses were a few Mongol tents scattered here and there, and endless stretches of slightly undulating plains. There was no more cultivated ground, and the rough grass grew in upright, stiff, yellowish clumps at good intervals apart.

Travelling in a northerly direction some seventy-five miles from the Great Wall, we had reached the present limit of Chinese colonisation. These colonists come mostly from Shansi province, and as they advance with the plough so the nomad Mongols retire with their flocks towards Outer



TROOP OF PONIES IN CHINESE CORRAL

Mongolia. The Mongols of Inner Mongolia are of a more virile and manly type than those of Outer Mongolia. Their contact with the Chinese settler too has had a civilising effect, and they live under rather better hygienic conditions than their brothers of the north. The Chinese settler leaves his women folk in China, and during his sojourn in Mongolia takes a temporary Mongol wife. Still disease, more especially small-pox and syphilis, is rife amongst these Inner Mongols, and their traces are noticeable in nearly every yurt one enters. We had now come up against the telegraph which joins Urga with Peking. Occasionally I caught glimpses of a small herd of antelope, who bolted at the sound of the cart. The first sight I had of a Mongol in his native land were two smiling Mongolian boys, who were waiting by the side of the track to ask us if we would take a bundle of matting for them to a small Mongol encampment 20 miles along the track. I agreed to do so, and as it was time for a halt, and water was obtainable, we "outspanned," and I went up to see the little encampment where the boys lived. It was the first Mongolian tent I had seen at near quarters. The Mongols call them "yurts," and this one, in contrast to every yurt I afterwards saw, was plastered over with mud. The principle of a yurt is very simple.

There is an oval framework which will shut up like an umbrella, and when opened out and in use is covered with strips of thick felt, which in their turn are kept in position with rope or strips of hide. A small door is placed away from the prevailing wind about four and a half feet high, and a circular hole is left at the top for the egress of the smoke. This hole can be wholly or partially shut by a simple contrivance of rope and felt. This constitutes the Mongol's habitation in the summer heat and winter snow. A fire is almost permanently kept going in an argol stove in the centre, which is a tripod of iron and forms an excellent fire-place for the dung that is used as fuel. They have no chairs, but sit cross-legged on fur rugs or felt on the floor, for tables they use small stools about six inches high, and for beds they use the ground, except in exceptional cases, when a low wooden bed is used. The remainder of the furniture is simplicity itself, and consists of a diminutive altar with offerings to their Buddha and usually a picture of the Hu-tuk-tu or their living Buddha on it, the lower portion of this altar being used as a cupboard. Perhaps there may be another cupboard of the same sort and a box or two as well, but that is all. This furniture is painted red with a thin gold line on it. A kind of long barrel

made of skin is usually placed on the right of the door, and in this stands a wooden stick. Here the koumis is made from mare's milk, and every person entering the hut is supposed to give it a turn with the stick. Koumis is the intoxicating drink mentioned by Marco Polo in his journeys in the East. It seems to act as food and drink to the Mongols when travelling hard, and I can well understand this, since I have often found a small drink of koumis revived me in a remarkable degree. The uninitiated, however, must be careful as to the quantity they drink, as it is a very intoxicating liquor. A friend of mine told me that once he quite innocently drank a mugful of it and slept in consequence for many hours. Anyhow, properly used it is a useful and very pleasant form of liquor. The family I visited consisted of father, mother, three brothers, and a pretty sister of seventeen, who was to be married in a few weeks. A wife is an expensive luxury in Mongolia, and may cost anything from a few head to a few hundred head of sheep, horses or cattle. This little girl was one of the prettiest Mongols I met during my journey. She was sitting cross-legged on the floor busily engaged sewing when I entered the hut, and was not at all averse to talking to me through her eldest brother, who spoke Pekinese,

and had been two years in a Lama's temple at Peking. He was then at home on a holiday and was returning to Peking in the winter. He expressed a desire to go with my caravan to Urga, which he had never seen, but apparently imagined to be a place of many delights. The father was employed to protect the telegraph line for seventy-two miles, for which he got ten shillings a month. The tea that is always handed to you on entering a yurt is not at all good. Unlike the Chinese tea, it is stewed up in a pot and kept simmering on the fire, and with milk, butter, and some flavouring added to it forms rather a nauseating mixture. It was very similar in taste to tea that I once drank in Little Tibet, north of Kashmir. The tea used in Mongolia is what is called block tea. It is sold in slabs, which are practically nothing but compressed tea dust.

I was met on the road before night by my fellow-travellers—the horse dealer, his assistant, and a groom. They had cut off a corner from Kalgan, riding across country and staying in Mongol huts en route. They reported having seen and chased a very large herd of antelope and tried to induce me to go back after them, but as I had no rifle with me it was no use. Before we bivouacked for the night I visited a small encampment of Mongols

MY FRIEND THE HORSE-DEALER WITH A MONGOL LADY

with the dealer, who spoke Mongolian perfectly, as well as Chinese, and seemed a "persona grata" in all the camps I visited. He was very useful, acting as interpreter, and told me a great deal about the habits of the Mongols. The hut we entered was furnished in rather lavish style with very fine rugs on the floor. It belonged to a Lama, who had large troops of horses and must have been a wealthy man as Mongols go. The Mongolian dogs outside these encampments are exceedingly fierce, and it is not safe to dismount unless a Mongol has appeared from one of the huts, but the merest babe of a Mongolian will calm the most savage-looking dog.

27*th May*.—The next morning we were off by daylight. The grass on the desert is extraordinarily nutritious at this time of the year. On arrival at camp at night and in the middle of the day our horses were hobbled and turned loose in the desert to pick up their own food. As a rule they were watered twice a day, but on more than one occasion when we could not get to a well they had to go quite thirty-six hours without water. At another Mongolian encampment, at a little distance away, were some Chinese itinerant merchants. The Mongols despise these merchants, who cheat them in a disgraceful way. The Mongols, always court-

eous and pleasant, scout the idea of trading or even tilling the ground. Certainly they are very lazy, and the only work they seem to do is to ride about looking after their flocks and herds and troops of horses. In one Mongolian tent that I visited a Lama asked me about the Dalai Lama of Tibet. He wished to know where he was—whether in India or in Russia, and what the English would do with him. This was just about the time when the Dalai Lama had fled from Lhasa at the entry of the Chinese army, and news of this had reached Mongolia. It was not the last time during my travels that I had questions asked me of Tibet, and what steps India was likely to take as regards that country. It shows how closely allied Tibet and Mongolia are, and how much interest the Mongols take in this subject. Lamas of Mongolia constantly visit Lhasa, and Lamas of Lhasa often come to Urga, so the connection and alliance between these two countries is kept up. The Mongolian Lama who spoke to me, seeing I did not drink the Mongolian tea, produced a dainty Chinese teapot and brewed me some China tea. He began to ask me after the Empress of India, and while his question was being interpreted by the horse dealer and I was making heavy weather in understanding him, the Lama distinctly but slowly framed the words—

"Vic-tor-ia." I was rather taken by surprise, but hastened to tell him that Queen Victoria was dead and that her grandson reigned in her stead. He beset me with questions: he thought she would never die, she was so great a woman; would her spirit descend into her grandson like their Buddha's? I assured him I hoped so, as she was a very great Queen.

28*th May*.—The next day we passed over the same limitless sandy yellow grassland; here and there a small rocky hill would protrude. Not a tree, not a shrub—nothing for miles but this endless plain. We came to wells at varying distances, much more frequently than I expected, and often water was obtainable within a few feet of the top of the well. I formed the impression that even this country with its nutritious grass, if well irrigated, might be valuable. The Mongols are such lazy people that they will dig no more wells than are absolutely necessary, and their nomadic habits do not make it necessary for them to have wells where they live. They will ride great distances with their horses to water them. I feel sure that it is for this reason and not for any scarcity of water that this portion of the Gobi Desert is always looked upon as almost valueless. The Mongols move their camps constantly, summer and winter,

from bad grazing to better. We came across some flocks of sheep and a herd of cows, and here for the first time got a drink of milk from a fascinating wooden bowl lined with silver, which forms plate, cup, and spoon. The climate now was dry and hot during the day, but the night was deliciously cool and refreshing.

29*th May*.—We started again the next morning at daybreak, and expected very soon to reach a well, but by 8 a.m. no well was in sight. I had never been so thirsty in my life; the brackish water at the last camp would not assuage one's thirst. It was another two hours' riding in the heat before we came to a well of good water. Here I had my long-wanted drink, and when the cart came up got a bath and some breakfast. The country was much the same, and had begun to get monotonous. In the afternoon we continued our march. I rode on with the horse dealer. It had started blowing a gale and raining, and fur coats were the order of the day. The country had got rather more hilly and rocky. Waiting in the rain behind a rock for the carts to come up, I tried to teach the horse dealer at his request, "God save the King." It was a most agonising performance, and I soon gave up, as he never got a note right. From our point of view the Chinese are not a musical race. Their

MY DESERT KITCHEN

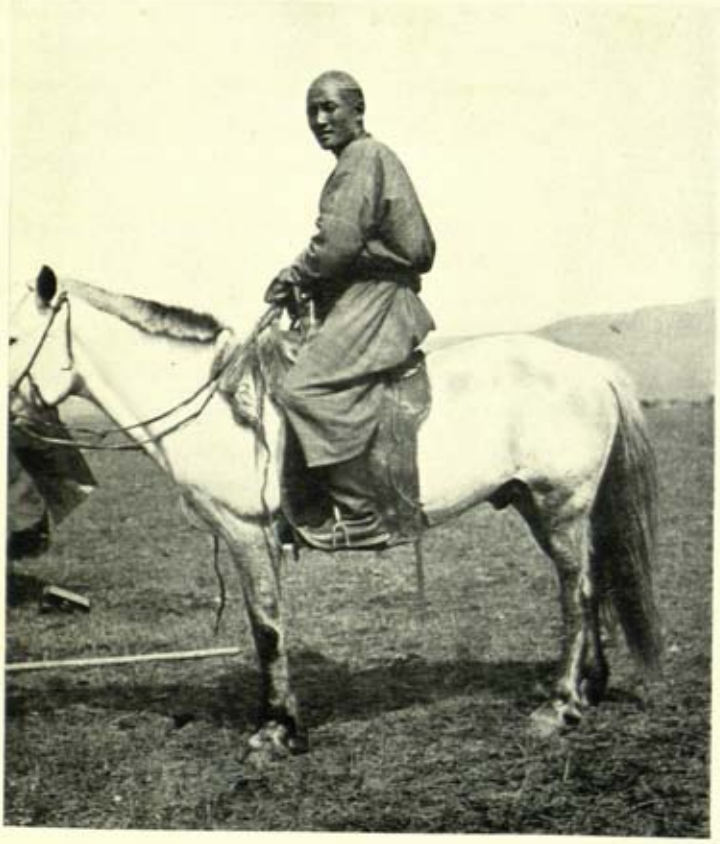
songs go up and down in a monotonous way almost on two notes. When the horse dealer tried to teach me a Chinese love song, which I think was rather improper, I must own I failed as dismally as he had over our National Anthem.

30*th May*.—We camped a little farther on near a good well. We had passed occasionally caravans of camels en route, each accompanied by a Mongolian dog, a huge animal with a bell round his neck, who looks upon the camels as his especial charge, and allows no one to interfere with them. One caravan had eighty camels, loaded with soda and salt.

31*st May*.—The next day was the hottest I had so far experienced. It was a case of flannel trousers and shirt sleeves, a curious contrast from the day before in fur coats,—a dry, scorching hot wind peeled the skin off one's face and cracked the lips. We passed dead transport animals en route half-eaten by vultures and stinking horribly. One poor beast dying, with vultures hovering overhead, I put out of his misery. There were also a quantity of skeletons and bones of transport animals along this caravan route. We went some thirty miles without a sign of water, and it was not until we reached Bangkiang, the first telegraph office met with en route, that we found a well.

Across the desert from Kalgan to Urga there are

three intermediate telegraph stations—Bangkiang, Ude, and Tuerin. These stations give the traveller a guide on his journey, and are rather welcome breaks. Each station consists of a Chinese house of mud and wood and a courtyard. These three stations met with en route are there merely to serve as transmitting stations to see that the line keeps open. The operator's life must be a dull one. They all complained of the loneliness, and longed to get back to the "Flowery Land." There are two lines of wire across the desert. One is a direct line from Kiachta to Peking; the other is a disjointed one with transmitting stations at Urga and the three desert stations. Up to this station we had covered some 170 miles of our journey, and here I rested for a day.



A SPORTING MONGOL LAMA

CHAPTER VI

ACROSS THE GOBI DESERT—BANGKIANG TO URGA[1]

2nd June.—Rain prevented an early start from Bangkiang, and when we did get away it was so bitterly cold that riding in furs I was nearly frozen. The intolerable north wind was very searching, and found its way through cart blankets and furs. These sudden changes from day to day made the heat and cold all the worse. During the march we passed a Buddhist temple in the middle of the desert, built of stone. The Lama in charge was away, so it was impossible to get into it, but a Mongol and a Chinaman who were with me had no scruples in helping themselves to fuel from the Lama's store.

Out in the desert again the water still continued to be brackish, and never quenched the thirst, and the more you drank the more you wanted to drink. A long string of empty ox-carts went by during the night. Camels and oxen do their journeys in the

[1] Extracts from Captain Otter-Barry's Diary.

evening or early morning—resting by day. The horse transport moves by day.

3rd June.—We halted for midday at a well of good water, and here I saw the finest troop of horses I had so far come across. The Mongol is adverse to selling single horses, and very seldom sells mares. He manages to keep up the quality of his breed in a troop by gelding all but the finest stallions. A Mongol is counted rich according to the number of horses, oxen, or sheep that he possesses. He has no use for money, and as all Mongols have the common right of grazing in their various little princedoms, land is of no consequence to them. Two Chinese came along the track to-day from Urga. Between them they were trundling a wheel-barrow. On this they had rigged up a sail which with the prevailing wind from the north helped them considerably. They had packed on their barrow their few goods, but very little food, as they depended on getting this given them by other travellers or by the Mongols. They told me they covered an average of 35 miles a day. They had been working in the mines of the Mongolore Company in Outer Mongolia, and were returning back to their native land. The risk of wheeling a single barrow with all one's possessions for over 700 miles, 650 of which

A "TRAMP" OF THE DESERT

were desert, depending on chance for food, seems extraordinary.

4th June.—A Mongol and two women rode into my camp at night from their encampment near by. They were what my horse dealer called beggars, and I gave them some food, but from the look of their small herd of goats and sheep and their respectable huts they certainly did not seem to be very poverty-stricken. In fact, this only bears out my idea that there is practically no destitution in Mongolia. It appears to be the custom amongst the nomad tribes always to welcome travellers who can speak their tongue, feed them, and even give them change of horses to continue their journey. We passed a string of bullock carts carrying wine from China to Urga in huge skin-covered vats. They take seventy days to complete the journey, the bullocks depending on the grazing en route for their food. At this period of the journey one of the carters almost broke down. Hard travelling, indifferent food, constant changes of temperature, and sitting up every other night to watch the horses had been too much for him.

As we came into the province of Me-ke-Nor we passed two large salt lakes. This seemed to be a salt district, and would appear to be very valuable if properly worked. No attempt so far

seems to have been made to get out the salt. It was near here that we came upon a small Chinese encampment of merchants selling cloth, grain, block tea, and other necessaries. The Mongols come in from all round the district to buy at this store. Their usual method of payment is to hand over a sheep, horse, or ox to the merchant, who keeps a tally and informs the Mongol when he has taken the value of the animal out in stores. This does not seem very satisfactory for the Mongol, but then the Chinese merchant expects to make huge profits for his trouble, and as the Mongol is as innocent as a child it is very easy to cheat him.

The country had now altered a little, the undulations were more pronounced, and here and there we passed salt marshes and lakes and saltish streams. This bit of country was the worst we had experienced.

5th June.—We arrived at Ude, the next telegraph transmitting station, on the night of the 5th. The country became pleasanter, and the temperature was almost perfect. Late in the evening I came across the first tree I had seen since leaving Kalgan, if such a miserable bit of vegetation could be dignified by that name. The country as we came to Ude was quite broken and pretty, with small streams.

THE ONLY TREE OF THE GOBI DESERT

I managed to buy a little roan pony here, as my riding animal was not a success.

6th–9th June.—We left late the next morning. The water now was no longer brackish, and the grass at our camping-place was very rich and good; the weather also was beautiful. However, this state of affairs was not to last long, as the next morning the heat while marching was almost intolerable, and for the next three days we saw nothing but a troop of horses unattended, a camel caravan of eighty camels, and a few duck on various saltish streams and ponds. In this portion of the country the ground was continually covered with layers of whitish, saltish substance. To say the least of it, these two or three days were extremely monotonous, and the monotony was only relieved by shooting duck for the pot on these ponds. The water was almost undrinkable, and had it not been for the water-barrels, which we had taken the precaution to fill up, we should hardly have been able to get over this 60 or 75 miles of country for want of drinkable water.

10th June.—At last we came to a well on the morning of the 10th June, but to our disappointment this well, which was very shallow, had been muddied to such an extent by a camel caravan that it was of no use, and we had to grind on another

12 miles for water. I was in the middle of having a bath when two Mongol women came up to our camp from a hut near by. My boy was rather shocked at their appearing, but the horse dealer naïvely said: "If they want to see the 'Lao yeh' having a bath, what does it matter, if he doesn't mind?' I didn't care at this stage of the proceedings very much one way or the other. Eventually I presented them each with a piece of soap, the lathering effects of which delighted them. The horse dealer kept on translating their remarks to me, which were rather embarrassing, such as "What a beautiful white skin he has got." "Is that because he washes with the soap?" "If we use soap shall we get a white skin?" etc. Later on a party of Mongols rode up into camp—men and women all riding astride. That evening during our march we came across a Chinaman lying on his back dead, with a fur coat on, near the small remains of a fire, with his pipe, tea cup and pot and a small bundle of clothes beside him. He was lying some miles from any water and had been dead some days, and it was sad to conjecture how he had died,—from hunger, thirst, or disease. Probably worn out, with no food, he had struggled on hoping to light upon a Mongol encampment, and then, tired out, had given up the effort and died in his sleep. I thought

"AT HOME" IN THE DESERT

of burying him, but on second thoughts imagined it was better to let him lie as he died.

11th June.—We camped some miles farther on, and early the next morning rode on to find water and a camping place for our midday halt. I hit upon a small trickle of a stream, and followed this up to its source, where I found a fine spring—a quantity of mint was growing near it, and here we camped. After our midday halt we took a bee-line across country for Tuerin telegraph station. Up and down we went over really fine, undulating grazing country, not a tree to be seen, but this country cannot in any sense of the word be called "Go-bi," which is the Mongolian for desert. We came across a tent belonging to a Peking merchant. He was bringing a camel caravan of skins to Kalgan. He had a Mongolian wife with him, a pretty-looking girl. One of his servants, a Mongol, milked a cow they had with them, and gave me a bowl of the milk, which was very refreshing. The merchant told me he would take another thirty-six days to get to Kalgan. His camels carried about 350 to 400 pounds weight—a lighter load than usual. In the distance we could see the hill at Tuerin known by the name of Mosquito Hill, and so we still made across country for this landmark.

On arrival at Tuerin we were very well received

by the two telegraph clerks. They had left their wives in Shanghai, and were living "en garçon" here, and both devoutly prayed for a speedy end to their exile. It was on the 11th June that we arrived at Tuerin, having completed this portion of the journey in twenty days. The clerk told me that there are a good many wolves in this part of the country, and that hares and partridges are fairly plentiful. About two miles to the west is the Lama Monastery of Tuerin. In the evening I walked down to the wooden hut of a Chinese merchant. He kept a general store, and sold all kinds of things to the Mongolians for miles round, and also had good customers in the Tuerin Monastery. The usual custom here seemed to prevail,—practically no money changed hands, all trade was carried on by a system of barter, on which the Mongol as usual gets very much the worst of it. No wonder they dislike the Chinese. Dependent on them for the necessaries of life, they have to accept their terms, however exorbitant, and, from what I saw, a great deal of bad treatment as well. Here is a race which at one time supplied the ruling house to China, bullied and cheated by the Chinese now that they are in subjection. The Chinese system of governing a subordinate race consists in a process of absorption, a system whereby they prey upon the people in

CAMEL ENCAMPMENT IN THE DESERT

LAMA TEMPLE IN THE DESERT

subjection under them. There is something in their insidious, patient way which eventually absorbs races and even individuals with whom they come into contact. Europeans are not free from the effect the Chinese have on them. A European after many years' residence in China becomes very pro-Chinese. His ideas, thoughts, even actions, and physiognomy become Chinese, and this in twenty or thirty years. If the Yellow Peril is ever realised it will not come with force of arms, but it will come very gradually by this Chinese characteristic of absorption. The Race of Han have won their territories not by force, but by infinitesimal trade, and absorption of the people they have come into contact with.

12*th June*.—At night I stayed in the telegraph station, and it was a relief to sleep in a comfortable camp-bed again and eat one's food off a table. I had thoughts of staying a day or so at Tuerin after the three weeks' travelling, and had told the horse dealer that he had better not wait for me; but my carter came to me much worried at this, and assured me it was not safe for our little party to travel alone, that the next two marches abounded in horse thieves, and that he could not sit up alone without the aid of the horse dealer's people at night to keep an eye on the horses.

13th June.—I was loath to leave early the next morning, the 13th June, but I was feeling much refreshed. I had managed to get some Mongolian mutton to eat here, which was a pleasant change. We had carried water for ourselves with us, but could find no water at night-time for the horses. I had a clock spring with me, and acting on the idea that there was surface water in many places in this country where no wells were dug, I found a likely bed of what must have been a stream in the rainy weather, and tried my hand at water finding. I had often found water in England with a spring, and after a very little while the spring jumped out of my hand, and so I set the carters to work to dig there. As I expected, they found surface water after about three feet, and this gave the horses sufficient drink for the night.

14th June.—The next day we did a very long march in the morning to get to water, passing across country over an almost flat plateau of the usual kind of grazing land. When we got up to the well, we met a miner returning by himself from Urga. He told us he had come from the Urga mines, and had left because of the outbreak of what he called "plague." I was rather startled to hear this, as plague had been rife in Manchuria two months or so before, and began to imagine that I should be

prevented from entering Siberia or getting my servant back by rail to Peking. I questioned the man, and eventually extracted from him the fact that the disease only attacked the miners in the Yero district, and apparently came from working near flowing water. He assured me the miners were dying in considerable numbers, and later on by a visit to the mines I was able to corroborate his statements. The disease, he said, attacked them in the legs, which turned blue, and eventually they lost all feeling. In the final stages the loins were attacked and the patient died. He said this outbreak was a yearly occurrence, but that this year it was very much worse than usual. This man was tramping back to Kalgan absolutely by himself, and carrying on his back what little he possessed. I wished him a safe arrival, and, after being supplied with a little food, he cheerily set off south. At night I was woken up by a stampede of all the horses towards the camp fire. With stories of horse thieves in my head, I sprang up with a revolver. We went right round in a circle to see what had scared the animals, but not a sign of anything could we see. So I left my shot-gun with my servant and got back into the cart. Again within an hour the horses stampeded. This time I ran up to the top of a small rise directly to see if I could

find the cause. The horse dealer ran up too, a little farther to my left, and then I saw by the moonlight what looked like a wolf making off as hard as she could. I fired my revolver at her, but the distance was too great. I think she must have had some young, and was short of food and came after the horses.

15*th June*.—The next day we continued our journey, and some little way on the horse dealer and I visited a tent of another horse dealer on his way down from Urga with 600 horses. He must have been a wealthy man. He had a great many servants with him, and his tent was thickly laid with rugs, and in it, presiding over everything, was his Mongolian wife. I talked with her through the medium of my horse dealer, and she told me she had been backwards and forwards across the desert many times. The horse dealer told me she was a rather "valuable" wife, and had been purchased with a large troop of horses. Anyhow, she seemed very capable, and smoked endless cigarettes. This dealer was bringing amongst his troop a very valuable animal, a horse which had won a race at Urga, and which he had bought on commission for a Chinese prince. When we came into our midday camp, a Mongolian lady with two children and a servant came to look at us. She had the most

MONGOL LADY, CHILDREN AND NURSE

wonderful arrangement of hair sticking out from her head like wings, and kept in place with a silver ornament studded with turquoise.

Her servant was nursing a baby and droning a song to get it to sleep. I asked the horse dealer to translate the rhyme into Chinese. The Chinese have a great many delightful little nursery rhymes, but I think the following Mongolian one that I have attempted to re-translate into English is as good as any of the Chinese :

"When he is big he'll ride a big horse,
Yai ! ya ! yai ! ya ! ya !
Then he will marry as a matter of course,
Yai ! yai ! yai ! yai ! yai !
What will he do when his children cry ?
Yai ! yai ! yai ! yai ! ya !
Surely he'll do the same as I,
Yai ! yai ! yai ! yai ! yai !"

While we were in camp a picturesque old Mongol rode up to us. I found out afterwards he was eighty-five ; but he actively jumped down from his horse, hobbled it himself, and came up to me and shook hands. He was wearing a red coat and yellow hat, and with his white hair looked quite a fine old man. The Mongols told us further tales of horse thieves. They said the night before four Mongols, one of whom was armed with an old-fashioned gun, attacked some travelling Mongols in

this camp. They stole three horses, some saddles and coats, and then got away. They came to warn me, in case we should be visited during the night. I thought it very unlikely they would attack us; but to make certain against them I gave my gun to the horse dealer, and posting a man to keep an eye on the horses and not let them stray, we turned in.

16th June.—Nothing happened during the night, and we were early on the road. The march was very pleasant. The track was gravelly, and wended its way through valley after valley; grass grew on either side, and hills showed up in the distance. It was much like a park drive, and kept one wondering when the "big house" would appear. We had to go for fifteen miles before we reached a well. At the well we met a small caravan of donkeys belonging to Chinese miners also returning from the Yero mines. They also spoke of this "water plague." These donkeys will cover twenty miles a day with a large load. We continued our march, but found no water for another fifteen miles. At this well we camped for the night. A Mongol rode into our camp to warn us again about horse thieves.

17th June.—The next morning our march was through the same "park-like" country. Here and there I saw rhubarb growing wild. The grass was excellent for grazing purposes, streams of water

A BLOCK OF ICE IN THE VICINITY OF URGA USED BY TRAVELLERS IN JUNE

were now plentiful, and there were duck on the ponds. At the side of a stream in a huge excavation of the bank was a large block of ice some 9 feet high and 12 feet broad. Travellers as they passed us this hot day in June were helping themselves to the refreshing ice. How it had remained unmelted during these hot days we could not understand, unless it was that its position in the bank, covered with grass and earth, had kept the heat from it. At our halting-place for the night the horse dealer insisted on me climbing the side of the valley to see the view. He told me it was well worth while, though the ascent was very steep and long. We went up together, taking a gun with us. It certainly was very arduous work getting to the top, but when we were at last there the view was magnificent. To the north were the roads all converging on to the main artery down this valley to Urga, and in the far distance we could see the bullock carts coming along, which had crossed the desert by the north-westerly road. There were mountains farther off to the north, and to the south-west stretched valley after valley all covered in trees, mostly pine, and down these valleys through lovely grass-land coursed streams and small rivers. Wild flowers abounded everywhere. The woods I was told were full of game, bears, and wolves. These were the first trees

I had seen, with the exception of the single tree in the desert, since leaving Kalgan, and they were most refreshing to look at. This is a view well known to travellers across the desert, many of whom make the ascent to see it. The Chinese grow quite sentimental over a fine view, and so it did not surprise me to see the fat horse dealer sitting on a rock at the very summit silently gazing at it. Though, of course, out of season, I shot one pheasant coming out of a copse at the top to assuage my desire for fresh meat, and as the dusk fell we descended again to the valley to our camp. This was our last camping-place before reaching Urga.

18*th June*.—The horse dealer and myself left our cart to follow, and rode on towards Urga. The road lay along what may be called the Urga Valley, steep hills in places covered with fir trees, a dense mass of green, which was a relief to the eye after many days of the desert, met us on each side. Here and there smaller valleys opened out into the valley along which we were travelling, usually with a stream coursing down the centre. Probably due to the relief of having finished with the endless stretches of desert, the country seemed to me a veritable Land of Promise. Real grass grew on each side of our road, water was plentiful, and the hills on either side, on which one could see troops of horses and

herds grazing, were delightful. The horse dealer, too, although his eyes were still bad, wore a pair of goggles I had given him, with a jaunty air, and had a word for every passer-by. As we neared the town of Urga we passed permanent-looking Mongol encampments, and began to realise that at last we were again setting foot in civilisation. Other roads had converged on this main artery to Urga, and the carts from the bullock road streamed in. About two miles from the town we passed a Custom-house. I showed my passport, and the horse dealer went in to have a chat with the officer. We then found ourselves confronted with a tributary of the Tola River; this was easily forded, and another tributary a few hundred yards on was also negotiated successfully. In winter, I understood, travellers may be held up for days after rain by these rivers. Having crossed the last of these tributaries we soon entered the Maimaichen, or market town of Urga; our journey across the Gobi Desert had been completed.

CHAPTER VII

URGA, THE CAPITAL OF MONGOLIA

"DA-HURAZ," or the Great Monastery, the Mongol name of Urga, is symbolic of this ancient capital, signifying as it does the high place that religion occupies in the national life of the country. This sacred city is the home of the Hu-tuk-tu, the spiritual and temporal ruler. The Chinese city or Maimaichen and the Russian settlement are two appendages of Asiatic and European Powers, settled here to supply the commercial deficiency of the Mongols. The city can be described as divided into three sections, Mongol, Russian, and Chinese, which, as the town is approached from the east, lie in a straggling line on either side of the river Selba. The Selba is but a small tributary of the Tola River, which flows under the sacred mount of Bogdo due south of the town. The most interesting section of the town is Kurin, the purely native Mongol city, situated to the north-west of the town, from which the road to Kiachta leaves Urga. Temples, university, and

THE MARKET-PLACE OF URGA. RUSSIAN SHOPS AND BUSINESS HOUSES ARE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND
(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostowetz)

convents, with Mongol huts and "yurts" seem to jostle each other here in an almost unintelligible way. Truly a "great monastery," as the Mongol name implies. The most striking feature here is a large temple, which encloses a gigantic Buddha, 100 feet high, made of brass from Dolonor, and inlaid with precious stones. This was a propitiatory offering erected by the present, the eighth, Hu-tuk-tu in recognition of the restoration of his eyesight.

In the Kurin are situated the "Gando" or university buildings, surrounded by convents which give accommodation to 10,000 professors, priests, and scholars. The education that is provided is chiefly from the books of Buddha, and is conducted very largely by men who have graduated at Lhasa, the Tibetan language being used at the university. Three students were being examined for what in civilised countries would be styled a degree in Arts, when the Gando was visited by Mr. Perry-Ayscough in March 1913. He was accompanied by the Russian Plenipotentiary, Monsieur Korostovetz, and Prince Damdinsurun, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs. The latter very kindly explained the procedure, which was as follows :—

The candidates, who must have attained the age of fifty, sit in the middle of the hall wearing yellow

caps and gowns. They are then cross-examined by their fellow-students, who approach them up a centre aisle and shout questions at them, at the same time clapping their hands, and gesticulating wildly, within a few inches of the examinees' faces. The questions asked and being debated were :—

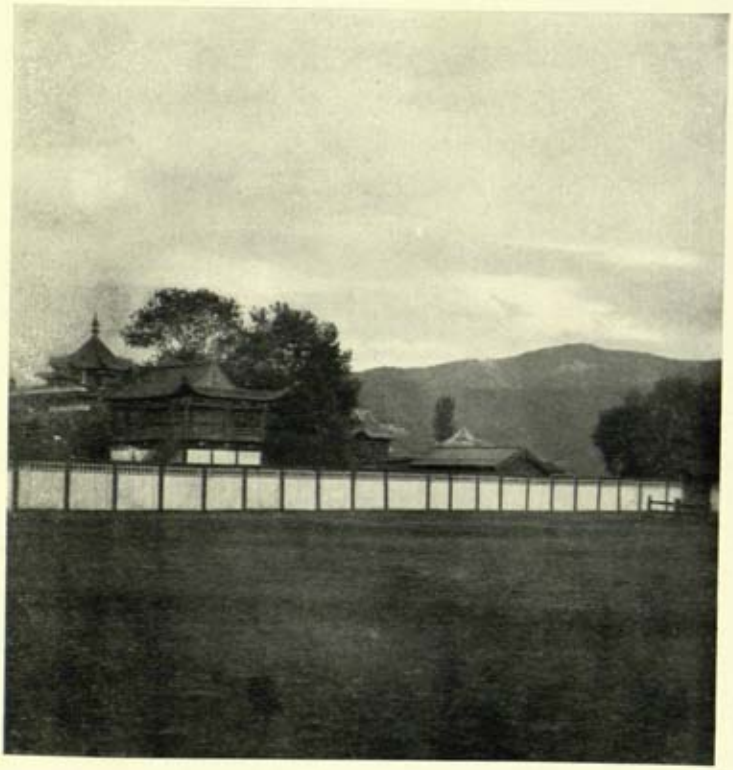
(1) Does the mountain called Bukung Buru mentioned in the book of Buddha rest *in* the ocean or *on* the ocean?

(2) What is the difference between a man sitting on a tree and a man standing on the ground?

The examiners sit behind the candidates and record the questions and answers in bulky-looking books. Judging from the laughter which was evoked on all sides, in which the examiners joined, from the answers given to the above questions, and the sarcastic remarks made by the questioners, the three students seemed to have small prospects of success.

These 10,000 men are not allowed to marry, and have to devote all their lives to this kind of learning. The idea of the Chinese was to turn them all into soldiers, an occupation which would have been more wholesome than their present vocation.

On the south side of the city is the sacred



PALACE OF THE HU-TUK-TU OVERSHADOWED BY THE SACRED MOUNT OF BOGDO

mount of Bogdo, which embraces a dense forest, a sanctuary for its sacred inhabitants, birds, bears, wolves, leopards, wild cats, foxes, and deer, who, protected by stringent laws against their destruction, roam about at will and become quite tame and docile. This sacred mountain overshadows the palace of the Hu-tuk-tu or Living Buddha. He lives here with his wife, a masterful woman who has a great influence over him, and his little son of ten years, who he hopes may some day succeed him on his temporal and spiritual throne. Near by is a small collection of temples, in one of which lives the Hu-tuk-tu's brother, the Choi Gin Lama, the Astrologer Royal and Oracle-in-Chief. He lives with his good-looking wife, his small daughter, and his Mongolian godson, little Prince "Tse-tsen-khan"—whose estate, one of the largest in Mongolia, is being administered by his mother, whilst he is undergoing his education in the Holy City from his spiritual father. In one of these temples are the mummied remains of the Lama who was spiritual adviser to the seventh Hu-tuk-tu. In his lifetime a very holy man, his embalmed body, gilded to his chair like a Buddha, is placed in the temple where he lived and died. It is a gruesome relic, but is venerated and worshipped by the Mongol pilgrims. In another temple the Hu-tuk-tu carries out the

ceremony of blessing pilgrims and great undertakings affecting the Mongol race; and here, too, is the very yurt in which only recently he was crowned temporal ruler of his people. The three thrones on which the Hu-tuk-tu, his wife, and son, who was crowned as his successor, sat, are here as a memento of that great day.

There are upwards of 10,000 Chinese scattered about Urga, some living in Kurin, others in Maimaichen, the Chinese section of Urga. They are not interfered with, and are allowed to carry on their usual avocations.

The Chinese telegraph office was taken over by the Mongols, after the signing of the agreement with Russia, in November 1912. Chinese employés were superseded by Mongols, assisted by Russian operators. A branch of what used to be styled the Ta Ching Bank exists in Maimaichen. This bank was started with a private capital of 2,000,000 taels, and has lent the Mongols about 700,000 taels. This debt is still outstanding, and at the time of the Declaration of Independence the Mongols wished to close the bank and cancel their debt. The Russians, however, pointed out that such an action would not be allowed.

The Chinese merchants at Urga, as in every other part of the world where they trade, being

content with small profits, continue to do good sound business, and need not fear competition from the Russians, whose main idea is to get rich as quickly as possible by charging the Mongols excessive prices. A Russian merchant in lamenting his lot at Urga, is said to have stated that he must console himself for *only* making 20 per cent. on his business with the Mongols, by considering himself *patriotic*. If 20 per cent. is the minimum, what must the maximum be?

The Chinese section is joined to the Russian section by a broad road, lighted by lamps on little wooden posts, and the first house of importance met with is the "Mongolore," the offices of the gold-mining concern of that name. This building is in direct contrast to the Russian Consulate, almost opposite to it, the Consulate being a poor, old-fashioned building, protected by trenches and barbed-wire entanglements. Surrounding this are the church, cemetery, hospital, and other official buildings. Not far from here is the residence of the last Chinese Amban, "San To." When the Mongols declared their independence, "San To" fled for protection to the Russian Consulate, afraid of these irate Mongols, whom before he so thoroughly despised. A strong man was "San To," one of the best of Chinese officials, capable and a good

administrator, but he spurned to ingratiate himself with the Mongols, and openly showed his dislike of the Russians. Affairs in Urga were in a curious state before the Declaration of Independence. Russia had the force, but no official status. China, in the person of "San To," had the official position as ruler of Mongolia; but with Peking 700 miles away, "San To" had no force behind him to back his word.

The Mongolian prison, a structure of wooden palisades, one within another, open to the heavens, and rather like the maze at Hampton Court, is also in the Russian section. This is a relic of barbarous times, which ought to be suppressed without delay. Prisoners condemned for whatever fault soever and, in some cases, when waiting for trial, are placed in a crouched-up position, in a wooden coffin, from which their heads and arms can alone protrude. These coffins are placed in a dark prison, half underground, and the miserable inmates are kept there, without being released, until their sentences are served or merciful death intervenes. The sanitary conditions that must prevail beggar description.

Colonel T'ung, late in command of Chinese troops, fled with "San To." His position under the régime of China had been a difficult one.

DEPARTURE OF THE MAIL CARAVAN FROM THE RUSSIAN POST OFFICE AT URGA EN ROUTE FOR KALGAN VIÂ THE GOBI DESERT

(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

Dispatched to China with Chinese officers in 1910, he was instructed to raise and arrange for the barracks of a Chinese Division in North Mongolia. Little but the construction of barracks outside the town had been commenced by the time of Mongolia's independence, and the only soldiers that were in Urga were some 300 Chinese provincials, mostly used for police purposes, and who were about as much good as old women with broomsticks for any other purpose. It is a strange fact that the Chinese post office has been the one Chinese institution allowed to remain under Chinese administration since Mongolia's independence. It continues to dispatch its mails to Kiachta and Kalgan as of yore.

The so-called Russian Concession dates from the establishment of the Russian Consulate, when Russian merchants received small tracts of land free of rent. Some of them leased part of their holdings to the Chinese in return for large sums of money, and in this way the Russian colony has got much scattered. The Concession consists of a huddled mass of houses made in a primitive style of earth and wood, and badly built.

There are about 1000 Russians in Urga, who are mostly tradesmen. Amongst them are bakers, tailors, chemists, soda-water factors, tin and iron

smiths, and vendors of fancy goods, crockery, and enamel ware.

Before the Independence, cloth and cotton, mostly made in England, America, and Japan, were freely imported by the Chinese. Now foreign goods are imported in lesser quantities, and Russian merchants and Russian goods are more to the fore. Despite this, an enterprising Teuton has established a gunsmith's shop, which, since the establishment of the Mongol cavalry brigade, has been well patronised.

The land question has lately been taken in hand, and the rules now in force are roughly as follows :—

(1) Russians can become owners of their allotments as soon as their rights of ownership have been confirmed and registered at the Consulate, and 10 per cent. of their real value has been paid.

(2) A town council has been formed, consisting of a mayor and six councillors, elected by all owners of land at an annual meeting. These landowners are divided into several categories, according to the amount of land that they own.

(3) Valuation of land and all taxation is assessed by the town council.

BARRACKS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT URGA

The first president or mayor of the town council is Mr. Prockin — a well-known merchant and old resident, whose choice is a fitting appreciation of his efforts for Russia in Mongolia.

Mongolia is crying out for reforms. The people are primitive, and under Chinese rule were left to themselves, and have rather retrograded than progressed in civilisation. Without advice the Mongols could not rule themselves, and the responsibility of this nation now rests with Russia. She cannot be expected to work miracles, and at one stroke to civilise this ancient nomad race. The work that has to be done will be slow, and will require the wisest of Russian officials to superintend it. Since the conclusion of the treaty a start has already been made in the capital Urga, and the Russian officials have been endeavouring to bring the Ministers and higher Mongol officials to realise the true condition of their country. The hideous condition of their prison system, and the almost ludicrous ideals set up as their university standard, are cases in point. One hears of old and sick people—no longer able to work—being turned out of their yurts and left on the hillside to die, or be eaten alive by dogs, which can be seen, even in Urga itself, devouring corpses. Amongst real improve-

ments already introduced at Urga, through Russian influence, are—

A hospital, maintained by the Russian Government, with a staff consisting of a doctor and Buriat assistants, where both Chinese and Mongols are admitted free of charge.

A monthly newspaper called the *New Mirror*, printed in special Mongolian type, under the supervision of Russian printers, in which paper articles on education, politics, and general subjects appear.

A telephone lately instituted to various parts of Urga, and in course of extension. Some objection was raised to this telephone system by the Mongols, who affirmed it would interfere with their religious processions.

A school for the sons of Mongols, where both the Mongol and Russian language is taught. The headmaster is a Buriat named Jam Sorano, who has graduated at St. Petersburg University. The dispatch to Irkutsk of Mongol boy students for education at the Irkutsk Gymnasia, and the opportunity given to young Mongol princes to proceed to St. Petersburg to see the civilisation of European nations. The Mongol men and women seen in the streets dress in much the same way ; the married wear long robes with shoulders elevated, much like the fashions of women in the reign of Queen

A MONGOLIAN PRINCESS IN HER OFFICIAL ROBES
(Photograph lent by Dr. G. E. Morrison)

Elizabeth. The head ornaments of Mongolian silver work, richly studded with turquoises, which the women wear, are so arranged as to stick the hair out on either side of the head like wings, and this forms an admirable framework for their faces, which are often very pretty. The women's features are almost European, and the Chinese narrow sloping eyes are rarely seen. The people of Urga are far more agreeable to look upon than the tribes of Kirghiz or the Kalmucks. The constant stream of movement in the streets of mounted men and women (it is rare to see a Mongol separated from his horse), the heavy Chinese carts drawn by horse and bullocks at a walk, the light two-wheel Mongol cart clattering by at a trot, with here and there some black Tibetan cattle, with long shaggy hair, and an occasional Russian tarantass, form an animated picture, not easily forgotten. Even under Chinese rule the Mongols, a people of independent character, made but little obeisance, and fraternised with the Russian of the lower classes; but since their independence the difference in their bearing is quite noticeable. With haughty carriage and easy pride they pass down the streets of their capital as an independent people should. During the feasts of Maidan in February and Tsarum in July, when religious processions throng the town, the population

is increased by some 60,000 souls, but the actual inhabitants do not exceed 40,000 at other times of the year. During the feast of Tsarum some of the princes of neighbouring little principalities take this opportunity to call out certain of their men for archery practice. This archery meeting, really rather akin to a "Bisley Rifle Meeting," if one substitutes bows and arrows for rifles, takes place on a stretch of ground between the town and the palace of the Hu-tuk-tu. It is refreshing to watch this very ancient form of shooting taken quite as seriously as any rifle target firing in Europe in this twentieth century. Little imitation forts, some two feet high, are built up with what appears to be leather cubes. The markers stand behind these, and dance up and down making weird noises. The firers then advance and fire their arrows at the fort, and this practice goes on for hours. Some of the bows are fully six feet in length, and the arrows three feet long with a stone let in at the business end. Princes, easily discernible by the peacock's feathers in their hats, and subjects all take their turn at this practice. Large tents are erected for the firers, on some four or five ranges, and the ranges measure as much as 400 yards. This little by-play seemed to show that the Mongols have not altogether lost their fighting qualities. With proper

OFFICERS AND PRIVATES OF THE NEW MONGOL ARMY WHO HAVE BEEN DRILLED AND ARMED BY THE RUSSIANS

(Photograph lent by Dr. G. E. Morrison)

leading and training there seems but small doubt that the Mongols would form formidable mounted troops, seeing that most of them are excellent horsemen, and inured to all sorts of hardships. So far the Mongolian army is not formidable. There are some 600 mounted men, and a guard for the Hu-tuk-tu without uniform, but armed with modern rifles. The bodyguard of the Hu-tuk-tu, numbering 200, is under the command of Toch-To-Hogun.

The Mongol army is under training at the hands of the Russian instructors.[1] The men already trained are distributed amongst various places in Southern and Western Mongolia. A force has been dispatched to act against any inclination of the Chinese to advance into Mongolia. This force on its return may form a valuable nucleus for a Mongol army. It is true that the Mongols drill quite well after proper instruction. They are naturally good shots and excellent horsemen, but there are difficulties

[1] These men as seen on parade in March 1913 do not give the idea of trained soldiers in the accepted sense of the term. They are armed with old style Russian rifles and long cavalry sabres. Their appearance is slovenly in the extreme. They wear no uniform, and drill in their native boots.

The two companies inspected had been trained respectively for seven and two months. To the credit of their instructor be it said, they carried out various evolutions, rifle and sword exercises, company drill, etc., with zeal and alacrity. They are housed in the old Chinese barracks adjacent to the Russian camp.

which will have to be met before it is possible to form anything worthy of the name of an army from the Mongols. The great difficulty is the objection on the part of the Mongol princes to allow their subjects to become soldiers. Again, the Mongol dislikes soldiering as a regular. He is used to the militia form of soldiering, and he objects to discipline, which would be entailed in regular soldiering. The eyes of the Mongols, too, get diseased from overpowering smoke in the yurts, and syphilis is very prevalent, which is not improving the physique of the race. As infantry they would be impossible ; the Mongol cannot walk, accustomed as he is to the use of unlimited horses. Still the Russians have a scheme for forming some kind of fighting force, and this for the present comprises the formation of a cavalry brigade of about 1000 men, and a company of quick-firing guns, and half a battery of artillery. To carry out this idea a Russian colonel—Colonel Nodejny—a dozen Russian officers and thirty N.C.O.'s will be used as instructors. The police at present used are Mongols stiffened by Russian soldiery. In March 1913 there were not more than 700 Russian Cossacks in Mongolia, with machine guns and artillery, and these were divided between Urga, Kobdo and Uliassutai. They have since been reinforced. As is usually

PARADE AT URGA OF FIRST RUSSIAN-DRILLED MONGOLIAN BATTERY OF ARTILLERY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE RUSSIAN PLENIPOTENTIARY AND THE MONGOL PRINCES AND MINISTERS

Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostowetz

the case, when a European Power becomes associated with a lower race, the lower race takes to drink, and drunkenness is on the increase. The Mongol Government is strict against this vice, and a drunken Mongol in the streets is taken to prison and beaten. The Chinese Criminal Code is still in use. Prisoners are flogged on the body, or slapped on the face with leather, or hung up by the fingers as minor punishments; and there is that iniquitous prison already mentioned, for more serious offences.

Russian mechanics are employed to make bricks, cut stones, and build houses. The wages for these mechanics and for all manual labour are high, as the Mongols will not undertake this sort of work. It is impossible in Urga to get even a pair of boots mended; these have to be sent to Kiachta.

The only gardens extant are in the late Chinese officials' houses, and one or two market gardens kept by Chinese. Long narrow bridges made of fir trees cross the streams and swampy ground, but in rainy weather even these bridges become covered with water. The Hu-tuk-tu takes a personal interest in the efforts at advancement in his capital, but he is much handicapped by want of funds.

Amongst prominent personalities connected with Mongolia are the following :—

THE HU-TUK-TU—*Je-tsun Dampa, or Bogdo, or Edsenhan.* A man of about forty years old, who has weak eyes, and wears blue spectacles. His wife, of about the same age, possesses great power, and influences him in no small degree.

THE MONGOLIAN CABINET.—*President: Prince Sain Noin*, an intelligent man who is the mainstay of the Cabinet. He joined the Cabinet in July 1912, and succeeded Da-lama.

Minister of Interior—Da-lama. Chief Lama of the convent, an honest man; one of the deputies sent to St. Petersburg to ask for assistance in 1911.

Minister of War—Da-lai-van.[1] A sinologue very much interested in the arts, without any military influence or importance ; employed as Minister because he was one of the first princes to advocate separation from China.

Minister of Finance—Tu-she-tu-van. Honest, but has little or no influence.

Minister of Justice—Nam Sarai-van. A boon companion of the Hu-tuk-tu, with whom he has much influence ; possessed of hereditary property on the Russian frontier, near Lake Baikal.

[1] *Van* signifies prince.

Minister of Foreign Affairs—Han-ta-van. Leader of the deputation sent to Russia in 1911. Very pro-Russian; now Mongolian representative at St. Petersburg, and recently decorated with the order of St. Anne.

Minister of Shabeen[1]*—Chan-so-bah.* Opposed the Declaration of Independence and the understanding with Russia; was deposed and sent into exile by the Hu-tuk-tu; since returned. His post is a sinecure, and he has no influence. Under the Chinese was Minister of Finance.

All Ministers are supported by under Ministers, who are for the most part southern and eastern Mongolians, and not Halhar or Outer Mongolians. Some of the under Ministers possess brains and intelligence, and the Ministers are inclined to be jealous of their influence.

Prince Damdinsurun. — Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs; was military commander of the Mongols at Kobdo, when the Chinese troops were turned out in August 1912. He is enterprising and has initiative, and comes from Barga in East Mongolia.

Wu Tai, Prince of Cherim.—His principality is on the northern border of Manchuria, north of Taonanfu. He was expelled by Chinese

[1] *Shabeen* are 150,000 people who pay direct tribute to the Hu-tuk-tu.

troops, who, it is currently reported at Urga, killed men, women, and children. Most of his subjects fled to Barga, whilst he and his wife came to Urga. He is now in receipt of a pension, and has the post of Assistant Minister of Justice. He has protested, so far without avail, against the barbarous prison system in vogue.

Hai San Fun.—Another Assistant Minister: belongs to the party of Da Lama. Formerly had much influence; was one of the deputies to St. Petersburg in 1911.

Toch To Hogun.—Chief of the bodyguard of the Hu-tuk-tu, which consists of 200 men, who have followed his fortunes from Southern Mongolia. He has had a varied career, and is famous as a robber chief. He is said to have been driven to pillaging owing to the persecution that he received at the hands of the Chinese; was eventually allowed by the Russians to settle in Transbaikalia, and was on the point of becoming a naturalised Russian when Mongolia declared independence. He therefore hastened to Urga to offer his sword and his services to the Hu-tuk-tu. Has nothing officially to do with the Mongolian army, now being trained by the Russians.

Mr. Moskuitin.—Was a member of the Russo-Asiatic Bank when that institution opened at Urga in 1906. Is a good Mongol

TOCH-TO-HOGUN, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HU-TUK-TU'S BODY-GUARD, WITH HIS WIFE AND ATTENDANTS
Formerly a robber chief of Hung Hutzu, he revolted against the Chinese, was allowed to settle in Siberia by the Russians, and at the time of the declaration of Independence by Mongolia, hastened to Urga to offer his sword and services to the Hu-tuk-tu
(Photograph lent by Dr. G. E. Morrison)

scholar, helped various princes with loans, and, through no fault of his, the bank lost about 400,000 taels through false chops being impressed on receipts. The bank was then closed. He was a councillor to the Mongolian Government when independence was declared. Is now in Russia, having a concession from the Mongol Government to raise funds in order to start another bank at Urga. Was formerly correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*; the present correspondent is Mr. Griarsz Nooken, who is also chief of the Russian Printing Office, and a lay reader in the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Mongolore Mining Company.—In 1896 a concession was granted to Mr. von Grotte by the Chinese Government and the Mongolian princes Tse tsen Khan and Tu She tu. After the declaration of Mongolian independence, Mr. von Grotte resigned his interest in the Company and left Mongolia. The management is now in the hands of a new director, Mr. Pokrofsky, with Mr. Dambrofsky as sub-director, sent from St. Petersburg, who made a new agreement, it is said for twenty years, with the central Mongol Government. The same conditions hitherto prevailing have been renewed, and the dividends are distributed amongst the shareholders,—mostly Russians,—the Mongol Government receiving 16½ per cent.

The mine, which is situated on the Yero River about 100 versts north of Urga, continues to turn out much gold. The workmen employed by von Grotte were mostly Chinese, who are still retained. A description of Captain Otter-Barry's visit to this mine is given in Chapter X.

Besides numerous Russian merchants, the British-American Tobacco Company is represented by Mr. Maman, and a brewery has lately been established by Mr. Bruno Hinrich, an Austrian.

CHAPTER VIII

FINANCE AND COMMERCE—CATTLE AND HORSE BREEDING

THE finances of Mongolia are in a bad state; so bad, in fact, that they are a cause of the gravest anxiety to the Mongol Government, if not to Russia herself. Salaries have to be paid, money for many reforms has to be forthcoming, and Mongol princes, dissatisfied, since the Declaration of Independence, at the cessation of their subsidies from China, have to be pacified. The Russian loan to Mongolia has already been expended, and the Mongol Government, aided by their Russian advisers, are anxiously casting about for some means of raising the necessary revenue. A Russian financial adviser is to be appointed in the near future. At the beginning of 1912 the Mongol Government, in order to collect revenue, instituted a Customs tariff of duties on all Chinese goods coming into Outer Mongolia. This duty consists of 5 per cent. valuation. Custom-houses were started at Urga and Uliassutai.

For the last year the revenue obtained from this source amounted to approximately 500,000 roubles. This source of revenue, no doubt, if well organised, could still further be increased; but it is common knowledge—the Chinese merchants themselves making no secret of the matter—that Chinese goods evade this duty by following different routes. At Uliassutai the system works very badly, owing to the iniquitous tariff that was first, quite independently, imposed by the Customs authorities, and the ever-increasing departure of Chinese merchants. In consequence, the receipts from the Uliassutai Customs, according to the Mongol returns, amounted to only a few thousand roubles. The only other source of actual revenue is derived from the Mongolore Gold Mine, which has to pay 16½ per cent. on all gold obtained.

That there are other sources of income obtained by the Mongols, there appears to be no doubt. Their expenditure is very much greater than their estimated revenue from these two sources only. But the Mongols are very secretive as to their finance, and it can only be conjectured that the Shabeen Collectorate and the pilgrims' offerings, which before the Declaration of Independence were exclusively used by the Court and the Hu-tuk-tu himself, are used to defray some of the expenses of

the State. "The Shabeen" consist of about 150,000 people who have to pay tribute to the Hu-tuk-tu, and the amount of this tribute, although unknown, is supposed to be very great. The offerings of the pilgrims, who come to Urga in hundreds of thousands from all parts of Mongolia, from China and Tibet, and even from Russia, are computed to amount to at least 1,000,000 roubles. Other schemes are now under consideration, such as the taxation on fishing rights, cattle, etc. It is hoped that the Mongolian Government will not interfere with the posts and telegraphs to obtain revenue, as they have a distinct international character. The question of a bank is another serious one, which is at present on the tapis. The Chinese bank, which flourished before the Declaration of Independence, still exists, guarded by Russian soldiers, but it does no business. The paper money of this bank, which was issued some two and a half years ago, when Mongolia was under Chinese rule, has been in wide circulation, and dollar notes were accepted at the same value as Russian roubles and notes. After the Mongol independence the paper currency gradually depreciated in value, but the commercial status of the Chinese (notwithstanding the absence of any silver reserve fund) was so steady and reliable, that this paper money gradually returned

to its former value and continued in circulation. Up to the time of the Russo-Mongol agreement this situation remained the same; and when the Mongols invited the bank to close its doors, the bank director took leave of absence and left the management of affairs in charge of his deputy, who, applying for Russian protection, was furnished with a guard. Then the notes began to fall again, and now these notes have practically disappeared from circulation altogether, though the dollars and cash remain in circulation at a depreciated value. This was the only solvent bank at Urga. True, the Russo-Asiatic Bank had had a branch at Urga, but some three years ago had been obliged to stop operations owing to heavy losses caused by the inability of Mongol princes to pay their debts. The Mongolian Government saw the necessity of having some form of bank, and under the advice of the Russians granted the concession for the establishment of a national bank to a Russian subject of the name of Youferoff. He endeavoured to obtain the necessary capital to start business from Russian financial houses, who were not disposed to subscribe, fearing the fate of the Russo-Asiatic Bank. Then the Russians tried the French and English financial groups, but so far negotiations have had no result, and the question of the national bank still remains

open. A bank is badly needed: at present money is carried in boots, boxes, or some such primitive method. A high rate is charged on transfer of money by the post, and the amount transferable is limited. The Mongols keep their money in specie (lumps of gold and silver, stolen often from Russian and Mongol mines by the Chinese miners), and barter amongst themselves by a system of exchange. All this is bad for trade, and prevents the proper circulation of money. With the creation of a national bank these evils would be abolished and commerce would gradually increase, and the abnormal rates of interest now charged would be reduced.

The two nations trading in Mongolia to any extent are Russia and China. It is quite clear that Russian merchants spoil the market. In the first place, in their export trade they will bargain against each other to so great an extent that their purchases do not pay, and in their import trade they expect to make such large profits that they are very easily undersold by the Chinese, even with the extra duty imposed on the Chinese imports. In one case over a concession for the sale of motor cars in Mongolia, the Russians bidding against each other raised the price so high that it was obviously impossible to make the venture pay. Examples of the

profit they expect to make are countless. But perhaps the following is the best. The Hu-tuk-tu had decided to be photographed, so that all his loyal subjects might have the likeness of their "Living Buddha" in their yurts. Arrangements were therefore made for several thousand copies of his photograph to be printed. The actual cost of the photograph to the photographer was 15 kopecks, but the Hu-tuk-tu was charged 1 rouble per copy. The only photographer in Urga was a Russian, who had been a jeweller in Covent Garden in London. It is to be hoped that if he took the photographs he did not learn his ideas as to profit in our national capital. Urga is the distributing centre for exports and imports from and to Mongolia. The Treaties of Nerchinsk (1687–1689) and of Kiachta (1727) regulated the Chinese-Russian questions, and from 1729, Mongolian and Chinese products entered Russia at Kiachta, passing en route through Urga. In those early times, payments were made in kind; tea, sugar, silk, etc., from China were exchanged for cattle, skins, furs, hair and wool from Mongolia, which were again exchanged for cloth, iron, copper work, opium, and rhubarb from Russia.

At the present day this system of exchange still holds good in places in Mongolia where money is little used, but during the last sixty years the usual

payments have been made in silver. The tea carrying trade was the most successful, and many Russian firms grew rich from it; but for some years now this trade has been declining. The opening of the Odessa-Suez route, connections between Russia and Turkestan viâ Samarkand and Kashgar, and eventually the opening of the Manchurian line, combined together to give the tea trade its practical death-blow. But there is still a certain amount of carrying tea trade with Russia, the words "Urga" and "Kiachta" having a magical effect on certain customers.

The sea voyage is always supposed to have a deleterious effect on tea's aroma. Russian firms eagerly await the opening of the Kiachta-Urga Railway, knowing that this will revive the old trade, though their trade at present no longer passes through this route. Mongolia, or rather Kiachta, received a heavy blow in 1909 through the abolition of the article in the Russian duty tariff, which compelled silk to pay a duty of ten roubles. At present, as it was under Chinese rule, the Chinese trade with the Mongols is the most flourishing, and the Russians are unable to compete against them. It is the Chinese who supply the Mongols with such things as cotton cloths, silk caps, tobacco, sugar, and brick tea. Metal and silver ornaments for the

Mongol ladies are nearly all of Peking make, even the wooden bowls in general use by the Mongols being made in the Chinese capital. The Russians have the largest trade in cloth, Russian cloth being much prized.

The Chinese import trade during the last year amounted to about 10,000,000 roubles, and in good years it should reach 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 roubles; but unrest among the merchants owing to the political situation has had the effect of decreasing the trade. The Russian traders themselves allow that the Chinese hold the sway as to imports into Mongolia.

The export trade to China is not less than 1,000,000 roubles, according to rather uncertain records,—and on this showing the importation exceeds the exportation in the ratio 10 to 1. There are some 200,000 Chinese colonists in Mongolia according to the latest Russian computation, and these colonists have a great quantity of their food brought from China. As is the usual case with the Chinese, their merchants up to the time of the revolution kept well together; they knew the Mongol authorities, and had, in fact, all the trade in their hands; but since the revolution this state of affairs has somewhat altered. The Chinese merchants have not now the same influence as of yore,

and the Mongols have ceased to pay outstanding debts, and this has ruined many Chinese undertakings. The Mongol debt to the Chinese bank is still outstanding. Chinese goods, too, owing to the troubles in Mongolia and China itself, have increased in value, as, for instance, the price of brick tea, a staple commodity, which has increased from fifty cents to $1.50.

Now as to Russian trade—according to the latest returns there are twenty-five big commercial firms in Urga. During the year 1912, Russian firms imported into Urga Russian merchandise amounting to about 600,000 roubles. This was mostly manufactured goods, such as cotton, cloth, velvet, iron, and leather. The exports from Urga to Russia during the same period amounted to 2,000,000 roubles, and consisted mostly of wool, skins, and furs. To these exports should rightly be added the value of ponies, cattle, rural products, wood, hay, and fish, which are difficult to control and therefore almost impossible to calculate accurately. As regards cattle brought out of Mongolia into Siberia viâ Kiachta, Kossogol, and Kosh Agatch, the value amounted to about 4,000,000 roubles ; on this calculation, therefore, it will be seen that the exportations largely exceeded the importations. The chief centres of exportation for cattle and raw material are Urga,

Van hurai, Zainshabi, and Kobdo. The value of the exports and imports, etc., can be classified approximately as under :—

	Exports.	Imports.
	Roubles.	Roubles.
Urga	2,000,000	600,000
Van hurai } Zainshabi }	800,000	200,000
Other places	...	200,000
Cattle for Transbaikalia .	4,000,000	...
Gold from mines	1,200,000	...
Totals	8,000,000	1,000,000

The greater part of the skins and furs go to Germany, Austria, and America in transit through Russia.

The sum collected for transit charges amounts roughly to 1,000,000 roubles, thus bringing the net value of exports and imports up to 10,000,000 roubles.

From the beginning of 1913, Russia suppressed the "Free Zone" that existed according to Russo-Chinese treaties along the Siberian frontier. This Free Zone was established by mutual agreement in the Treaty of 1881 between Russia and China in order to facilitate commercial relations and intercourse between the two countries, whereby traders of Russia and China were able to buy and sell goods free of all Custom duty over a zone of fifty versts on

either side of the frontier. Owing to the difficulties in connection with the negotiations for the revision of the treaty that took place during the period 1911–12, Russia decided to suppress this free zone trade, this being also the wish expressed by China. Russia therefore established Custom-houses at various stations along the frontier of Mongolia. This seems a contradiction to the conditions laid down in the Urga Convention, according to which all Russian goods are imported free into Outer Mongolia, and Russian traders are allowed to import goods into Mongolia without restrictions, and Mongolian goods were to enjoy equal facilities in Russia. It is said that the Mongols bitterly resent this absence of reciprocity in treatment on the part of Russia, and that it has had a very disturbing effect on the inhabitants residing on both sides of the frontier.

Under present conditions a traveller from Mongolia, be he a Russian or any other nationality, is subject to Customs examination and corresponding vexations not only at Kiachta, but at a second station at Ust Kiachta, 25 miles to the north-west, and at a third station at Tanhoi, near Lake Baikal on the Trans-Siberian Railway. The same conditions prevail on the Kobdo-Kosh Agatch route, there being a station 15 miles beyond

the frontier and another at Kosh Agatch. In order to encourage Russian trade with Mongolia, the Russian Government has diminished the railway tariff on goods coming from Russia into Verhne Udinsk and Urga by rail. Furthermore, in order to encourage the sale of brick tea exported from China by Russian merchants viâ Hankow, Shanghai, Vladivostock, Verhne Udinsk, and in order to compete against the carriage of this commodity by the caravan route across the Gobi Desert from China, the Russian Government has much reduced the railway tariff. Brick tea in Mongolia not only acts as food, but is used as currency and generally as a means of exchange. It is a very ancient custom, and house rent in Urga is often computed on so many bricks of tea. This tea is compressed tea dust, and sold in various sizes of slabs; hence the name.

Cattle, oxen, sheep, goats, and ponies are exported at the present time from Mongolia in large quantities. These are sold not only in Siberia, but also in European Russia. If only the Mongols could be persuaded to adopt more scientific and rational methods for feeding and breeding, this cattle-breeding business could be greatly developed. The Mongols, however, extract all that they can from their cattle without paying any attention to their

A TROOP OF MONGOL PONIES

welfare, and the cattle are allowed to shift for themselves all the year round.

The grazing for four or five months of the year in most parts of Outer Mongolia is excellent; for the remaining months of the year it is a case of the survival of the fittest. No provision of food-stuff is made during these winter months. The ground is covered with snow, and it is only the strong amongst the stock who manage to scrape sufficient from under the snow to keep themselves fit. The weak and sickly die. If the Mongols chose to collect sufficient hay for the winter months or grew other food-stuff for their stock, and took the trouble to see to the breeding, these valleys and even the grassy steppes of Mongolia could form huge grazing grounds for thousands of cattle. But the Mongol is indolent and improvident. He has no desire to grow rich, and all that he requires for his simple needs are easily obtainable, so the stimulus is absent.

During May 1913 in the vicinity of Urga, owing to the effects of a heavy snowstorm, several thousand head of cattle were frozen to death. At this same time some 800 ponies, brought from different places in the interior of Mongolia for the use of the newly created mounted infantry trained by the Russians, also perished. The survivors of these ponies, about 200, were the

spare ones; the fat ponies, probably the least energetic, perished. Kids and lambs, following the Irish custom, are kept in the yurts until they are sufficiently grown to fend for themselves, when they are turned out on to the hillsides. It is no uncommon occurrence, when travelling in Mongolia, to find one's yurt the shelter of half a dozen lambs. Wolves are numerous, and in the winter months horses, sheep, and cattle are frequently eaten by them. Rinderpest, another scourge, is widely prevalent. The Mongols themselves take no measures against this disease. They affirm, if interrogated on the subject, that to perform any operation involving the shedding of blood of living creatures is against the precepts laid down in the sacred books of Buddha. Nevertheless they will kill and eat goats and sheep, though fish and birds are again left unmolested. Oxen, cows, and horses are only killed when suffering from extreme old age or sickness; but to kill such animals for butchering purposes is not encouraged by the Lamas. All the meat commerce is in the hands of the Siberian Jews, who kill and dress the meat in Urga and other towns.

Russians have created observation points at Kiachta, Kosh Agatch, Chuguchak, and Tunha, where veterinary surgeons are posted. Veterinary surgeons, taking their serum with them, are also sent

A SHEEP FOLD

into the interior of Mongolia to inoculate cattle, the property of Russian merchants, against rinderpest. The Mongol cattle are small sized, and, owing to the bad treatment they receive at the hands of the Mongols, they are gradually diminishing in weight. The Russian dealers and merchants testify to this, and are looking forward to any movement for the introduction of fresh blood into these herds. The exportation to Russia and China of cattle, and the scourges of rinderpest, are gradually combining to deplete the country of stock, and unless the Russian Government take some steps to legislate against these evils and form some plan for bringing fresh blood into the herds, this trade, which might have a grand future, will die out. The tendency of foreigners in Mongolia is to overrate the numbers of animals—statistics are very uncertain. The Mongols themselves know very little, as there has been no system of registration or taxation enforced; the latter is now being taken in hand in order to form a new source of revenue. Under Chinese rule, camels were fairly plentiful in North Mongolia, but the political situation in China has created such a demand for camels in South Mongolia that Russian traders have had great difficulty in purchasing camels, so much so, that during the early summer of 1913 there were no camels available at any price, and before

that on the main routes from Urga to Kiachta, Kalgan, Kobdo, and Uliassutai they were very scarce for transport purposes.

Certain Russian capitalists have for some years attempted to breed cattle under more normal conditions; and now several Russians, seeing a good source of profit from this cattle raising, are negotiating with the Mongolian Government for a tract of country for the introduction of fresh blood in cattle and sheep. The Mongols, though, are suspicious of all these undertakings, and do not at all favour Russian and Buriat enterprises. They may have good cause, if the stories that are rife of the attempts of Russians and Buriats to cheat the Mongols are true. In one authentic case a Buriat trader bought several thousand head of animals, promising to pay once he had them over the frontier. On getting them safely over the border he merely drove off his loot and refused to pay, the unfortunate Mongol owner—a prominent prince—losing thereby some 40,000 roubles.

As regards the troops of horses in Mongolia, much the same treatment is dealt out to them as to the cattle. The Mongol is a fine horseman, and will ride great distances without changing his mount. The journey from Urga to Kalgan will be completed by a Mongol only using one horse in

something like nine days, and this distance even by the shortest route is well over 600 miles. These ponies are extraordinarily hardy, living solely on grass in the summer months and what they can pick under the snow in the winter. Again it is a question of the survival of the fittest. For military purposes they should be of great value; they can carry great weights, are capable of doing great distances, and are used to living on the minimum of food and water. A pony in the summer months working all day, dragging a cart some thirty to forty miles across the desert, will often be watered only once a day, and sometimes once in every two days. In the winter months the Mongols will leave their troops of horses unwatered for three or four days. A Mongol never rides a mare unless he is very poor or very eccentric. Mares are used exclusively for breeding purposes and for milking, and from their milk "koumis" is made. A Mongol will geld all but the finest stallions in his troop, but he allows all his mares to breed. This somewhat indiscriminate method of breeding does not improve their stock of horses, but as a strong animal for hard work the Mongol pony is difficult to beat.

There are no Englishmen trading in Mongolia, and but few merchants of any nationality other than Russian and Chinese. There is an opportunity for

business men with a little capital—who do not mind roughing it. The Russian authorities, far from opposing the entry of foreigners, will welcome them, and with their usual courtesy do all that they can to assist them. It is a country with many opportunities, where capital is urgently required, a country which if only from political motives must be developed. Railways will come, the tea trade will revive, concessions will be granted. At present there is scope for cattle raising, horse breeding, and general trade, such as selling tea, sugar and salt, and other necessities to the Mongols, and buying from them skins, furs, horses, and cattle. The purchase price is low, the railway facilities of the Trans-Siberian line excellent. In a country where it is possible for merchants to make a profit of 50 per cent., and where a Russian considers himself "patriotic" if he only makes 20 per cent., it should not be difficult for merchants of other nationalities to do good and profitable business.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECT

URGA is the junction of all the main arteries of Mongolia. We cannot leave the Great Monastery on our journeys north to Kiachta or west to Uliassutai without some explanation of the religion of the Mongols, on which hinge the main political questions of the Mongolia of to-day.

It is not possible in this short space to attempt to thread the mazes of Buddhism, which has in course of many years developed into a vast jungle of contradictory principles, as Sir Monier Williams states: "It is under one aspect mere pessimism, under another pure philanthropy; under another Monastic Communism; under another high morality; under another a variety of materialistic philosophy; under another simple demonology; and under another a mere farrago of superstitions, including necromancy, witchcraft, idolatry, and fetishism."

That the teaching of Buddhism has conferred great benefits on the races of the East, there can be

no doubt; but as a religion it is a failure; it does not reveal God.

In Mongolia and in Tibet the form Buddhism takes is what may be called Lamaism, or Monastic Communism. Buddha to them is the highest form of intelligence, in other words, the perfect Man, and their object of worship is some person whom the Lamas decide to be the one in whom the spirit of Buddha dwells. In this faith the Grand Lama in spirit never dies; he is lost sight of in one form to reappear in another; and it is the duty of the other Lamas to decide who he is, or where he is to be found at any time. The religion of Mongolia is the religion of Tibet; the Dalai Lama of Tibet is the religious head of both Mongolia and Tibet. When the Dalai Lama dies the Lamas select some child to take his place, into whom they affirm the spirit of Buddha has passed. The Lamas inquire for any miraculous portents which might have occurred in connection with the birth of any male child about the period of the death of the Dalai Lama. The names of these children in old days were supposed to be written on pieces of iron and thrown into water; the name on the floating piece of iron being selected as the Dalai Lama's successor. As a matter of fact the procedure previous to the selection of the present Dalai Lama was in the first place a thorough

THE MONASTERY AT TUERIN

scrutiny of the names selected, by the Chinese Amban ; and after a selection had been made by him, one of his choice was drawn by lot from a golden urn, the first drawn becoming the Dalai Lama. The present Dalai Lama was selected, because his birthplace, his parents, and himself were seen in a vision by the Chief Lama of Galdan Monastery, who proceeded to the spot and found the infant.

Next to and joint heir with the Dalai Lama of the spiritual inheritance obtained from Tsongkhaba is the Panshen or Tashi Lama. He also resides in Tibet at Tashilumpo, some eight days' journey westward from Lhasa. His successor is also chosen in the same manner by lot as the Dalai Lama. Next in order come the class of Hu-tuk-tus (saints), a word derived from a Mongol word meaning "the one who returns again." These Hu-tuk-tus are also chosen by a lot drawn from a golden urn, and the infants so chosen are supposed to embody the spirit of the original holy man in their successive re-embodiments. These Hu-tuk-tus are supposed to be celibates, and the practice of choosing their successors by lot enforces the selection of some more or less suitable person for these positions of authority. The chief of these Hu-tuk-tus, or "Living Buddhas" as they are popularly called in Mongolia, is the Je-tsun Dampa or Holy Reverence,

the eighth of his kind, now living at Urga. He is said to be the re-incarnation of the historian Taranatha, who translated the Buddhist Gospels into the Mongol tongue. The present holder was born in Tibet, and is the son of a former steward of the Dalai Lama. This dignitary resided originally at Kwei-hua-Cheng. He was murdered by one of the suite of the Chinese Emperor Kang Hsi, and was born again amongst the Halhars of Outer Mongolia. Since that time he has resided at Urga in his several re-embodiments.

During the Chinese rule, in order that political intrigues between the Lama and the Mongol princes might be avoided, the Chinese Emperor ordered that the Hu-tuk-tu should be always of Tibetan birth.

There are some 160 other saints or Hu-tuk-tus of minor importance, and the chief of Inner Mongolia is Kanjur, who resides in the territory of the Siling-ol League north of Kalgan, amongst the Haschid Bannermen. It is authoritatively stated that one-third of the male population of Mongolia become Lamas, and fanatical followers of their spiritual leader the Hu-tuk-tu. It can therefore be understood that the power he derives from these followers is enormous; but owing to the ignorant superstition and non-scientific teachings of Lamaism

he is prevented from making use of his power to advance his nation. His position even now is a difficult one, with the elements of princes and priests to deal with. He has no counterbalancing force to use against the priesthood. He must not offend the Lamas, or he loses his power; and in this lies the crux of the political situation of Mongolia to-day. In a word, the nation is priest-ridden.

For example, at the inauguration by the Russians of the *New Mirror*, the Mongol paper, the editor was besought by certain influential Lamas and princes to confine the topics in the paper to subjects of general interest, which should coincide with their religion as now taught. In one article he happened to mention that the world was round. He was therefore requested to suppress such statements, seeing that the Lamas taught that the world was flat; and should he continue to contradict, on the score of science, any teachings of the Lama faith, he would assuredly set all the priesthood against education of any kind. It reminds one of the troublous times of the sixteenth century, when science and religious teachings came to such loggerheads, or the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, and many other instances of a serious nature arising from some trivial event connected with religion. The Russians had hoped that they might, by a wise

course of education, bring some element into being to counteract the priests' power, but they now realise that education, unless very gradually proceeded with, will not attain this end, and the influence of the Hu-tuk-tu, through whose central power they act, will itself be threatened. It is probable that they will attempt to bring "force" as the element against the pernicious priesthood,—force in the shape of a well-trained Mongol army, trained by Russian instructors, whose loyalty towards the Hu-tuk-tu will be inculcated, and on whom the Hu-tuk-tu may depend to uphold his temporal power.

The situation of the women in Mongolia is a very free one; they perform the same work and have the same privileges as the men, and are not at all suppressed as they are in China. The wives of the princes have considerable influence, wear official dress, and take part in all festivities. The Hu-tuk-tu, contrary to the rule, is a married man, and has a son of some ten years. His wife wields very great influence. At present the new Government is much occupied as to who shall be the heir to the Hu-tuk-tu. Intrigues are beginning on this vital question, and many of the influential Mongols are much concerned that there is no fit person to replace the Hu-tuk-tu in the event of his death. The Mongols are

BRONZE INCENSE BOWL, AT TUERIN

intent on a Mongolian being the next heir to the temporal throne, although the Hu-tuk-tu's son was actually crowned his successor. But the Hu-tuk-tu is a Tibetan, though his wife is a Mongolian. Will woman's influence in this case be sufficient to place the son upon the throne? Tu-she-tu-van, a direct descendant of the ancient Mongol emperor Jenghis Khan, would appear to have strong claims for support; he has a small following, but this Minister of Finance (his position under the present Government) does not seem very influential. In any case, it is certain that so long as Mongolia maintains her independence, she will no longer be compelled, as she was by China, to choose her ruler from the Tibetan people.

The marriage ceremony is sometimes a religious one performed by the Lamas, and sometimes it is a purely business affair between the parents; but in any case marriages are few and take place very early, and the children are not at all numerous, the average family being about three. The Chinese principle of large families and veneration for parents is by no means cultivated.

That Lamaism has an extraordinary hold on the Mongol people is quite obvious to even the most unobservant traveller in their country. Pilgrims journeying to Urga can constantly be seen making

their slow way there on foot, at every pace or two falling down on their faces, making obeisance to their Hu-tuk-tu, in the direction of Urga. These pilgrims will continue this slow and awkward progress for perhaps 100 miles before reaching Urga; and when it is remembered that at the best of times the Mongol dislikes walking, accustomed to ride from earliest infancy, the faith he must have to perform these acts, must even be greater than that recorded by Mr. Stephen Graham in his interesting book *With the Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem.* Then, again, one constantly on entering a Mongol yurt is told that such or such an article was blessed by the Hu-tuk-tu, and has miraculous powers of healing, etc., on this account; or perhaps is informed by a more educated Mongol that certain laws decreed by the Hu-tuk-tu, however harsh, must be just, as they emanate from the Living Buddha himself.

Scattered all over the country are lamaseries. Some of these are in prosperous valleys, where the lay-brothers tend the flocks and horses belonging to the monastery. Some of them are in the desert country. Most of them are dedicated to the Hu-tuk-tu of the district, though often this personage in his re-embodiment does not live there.

Captain Otter-Barry in his journey across the

PRAYER WHEEL IN TUERIN MONASTERY

Gobi Desert visited the lamasery at Tuerin. To reach the lamasary it was necessary to leave the grassy steppes of the so-called desert and go through a miniature pass with rocks on either side. The position chosen was ideal, an oasis amongst these grassy steppes. The lamasery nestled in a very small valley surrounded on three sides by rocky hills. It was a large settlement, with irregular streets of wooden huts, all gaily painted white, with red eaves. Here and there, filling gaps in the lines of huts, were Mongol yurts. There were three temples made of wood, and carrying out the same painted effect as the huts. The roofs were fine to look on, with upturned eaves, and along the edges of the roofs were countless little brass images of gods, animals, and men. On each side and running at right angles to the entrance of these temples were open sheds in which were placed large praying-wheels, some 7 or 8 feet high. In no other religion is prayer performed by machinery—or as Carlyle describes it, "the rotary calabash system."[1]

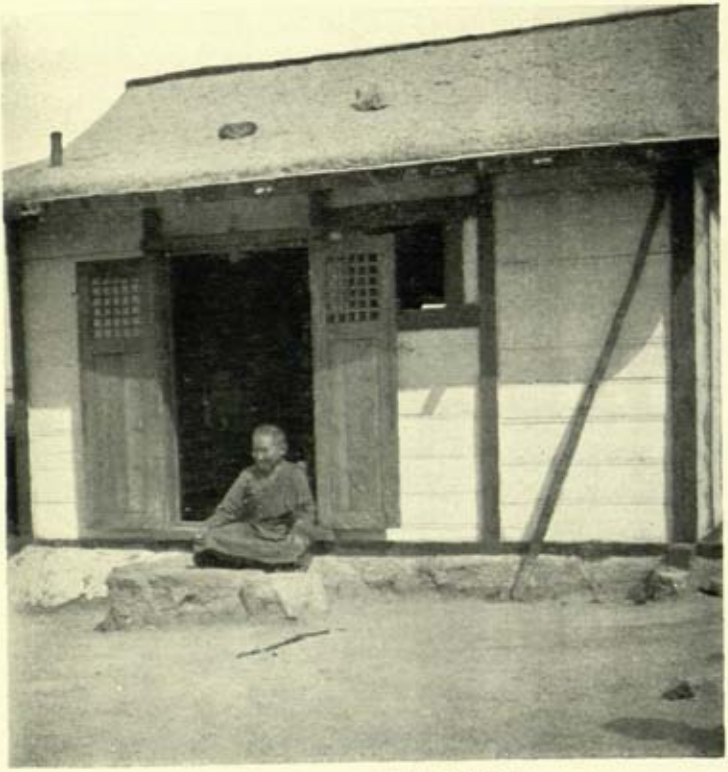
In the centre of the courtyard formed by these sheds was a wooden stand on which a brass or bronze incense burner was placed, finely worked with inscriptions in Tibetan. Over the front porch

[1] "Om Mani Padmi Hum," "Om the Jewel of the Lotus Hum," is inscribed on the cylinder.

of the temple hung a much faded piece of embroidery. The doors and sides of the verandah of these temples were decorated with frescoes representing gods; and there was one scene, probably depicting the abode of gods, a charming sylvan retreat with trees and streams and flowers—a very contrast to the treeless grassy steppes of the surrounding country.

The inside of a Lama temple has an almost mysterious fascination. The whole atmosphere, the pervading smell of incense, the little altars here and there with candles, offerings, and small incense bowls on them, remind one of Roman Catholic oratories. The Lamas, young and old, chant their service, which sounds strangely like a Gregorian chant; the younger members, like the proverbial choir boy, talk and laugh during the service. The singers have in front of them the words written in Tibetan characters, and the chant continues for an endless time. The sole education of the lower order of the Lamas simply consists in learning by heart to read these religious services.

There seems no doubt that the link between the Tibetan and Mongolian Lama is very close. The Lamas fatten on the superstitious ignorance of the people. The Mongols possess practically no knowledge of the simplest medicines, and pay the Lamas



A LAMA CHOIR BOY ("CHELA")

exorbitant sums for prayers in case of illness or dire misfortune. One member of nearly every Mongol family has at one time been a Lama of some order, and in the face of this fact, how such ignorance and superstition still continues is beyond one's comprehension. Some members of the lower orders, after serving a time in a lamasery, return to their homes, and eventually, though contrary to their laws, marry and have families.

Each Lama had his little wooden hut, which was remarkably clean, considering it was the abode of a Mongol. Inside these huts the furniture consisted of an altar, usually of wood painted red with a gold line, and on this were brass and silver bowls, and candlesticks finely wrought. A wooden bedstead with a thick felt mattress and blankets was on one side of the wall, and wooden chests painted red were placed round the other sides. In the corner was a fireplace open to the roof for the exit of the smoke. Most of the Lamas had a "chela" living with them in their huts, which reminded one of "Kim" of Rudyard Kipling fame. The "chela" acted as a servant, and was in turn taught by the older Lama the recitations used in their services. The Lamas wore no pigtails, and their robes were of yellow with dull red sashes. The Lamas are given a month's holiday every summer to return to their

own nomadic encampments. Here at Tuerin the prince of the district acted as head Lama, and was directly responsible for the lamasery to the Hutuk-tu. The Lamas were full of questions as to the customs of monasteries in Europe, and seemed to pay more attention to the material question of food and actual hours of worship of European monastic communities than to the more spiritual aspect. One of these Lamas had been trained in Lhasa, and took an intelligent interest in English customs and rule, and spoke of Tibet some day becoming a province of India. He was very strong on the point of the Tibetans' and Mongols' common interests—allied by close ties of religion. The whole life of these Lamas seems a useless, idle, and demoralising one.

CHAPTER X

URGA TO THE YERO GOLD MINES[1]

THE Chinese Resident at Urga had given me a pass, or "Chih I" as it is called in Chinese, for the use of a cart, riding horses, and shelter en route in Mongol yurts from Urga to Kiachta. This pass was quite unintelligible to me, as it was written in Mongolian characters, but it proved a veritable "open sesame" during my journey to Kiachta. The origin of these passes dates back to the occupation of Mongolia by the Chinese. Originally the Mongols were bound to supply transport, food, and shelter to bearers of these documents, thus enabling Chinese officials and carriers to travel anywhere they pleased in the country. This practice has now evolved itself into a series of stages between China and Russia across Mongolia, and between the chief towns of Mongolia itself. On these routes, at varying stages, horses are kept for the use of the privileged travellers bearing the "Chih I." As it happened, I used my

[1] Extracts from Captain Otter-Barry's Diary.

"Chih I" with excellent results off these recognised routes, so no doubt the old custom is still remembered. Since the Declaration of Independence by Mongolia, Russia has been endeavouring to do away with the abuse of these "Chih I's." During the Chinese rule, it was quite common for a traveller bearing a pass to demand money in lieu of some service he was entitled to, such as food, and the Mongols along these stages were thus often robbed. The Russian idea is now to arrange that all travellers, official or otherwise, shall pay a fixed rate for the use of horses, etc., along these routes. If they are offiicals they can claim their travelling allowances to defray the cost. My transport consisted of a cart with two horses and two riding horses, and these I found drawn up outside the post office, from which place I was making my start.

The cart was a small two-wheeled vehicle—the very opposite to the cart I used over the desert. One pony was hitched into the shafts, and another, ridden by a Mongol, was hitched by the side of it, the Mongol leading the wheeler. The harness consisted mostly of rope, which, in any case, was easy of repair on the way, and the little cart bowled away right merrily over the road. Rope and leather thongs seemed to make such excellent

A TYPICAL MONGOL YURT

STAGE OR T'AI, WHERE HORSES ARE CHANGED

harness, that cumbersome English harness seemed to me at the time quite unnecessary.

As I was just moving off, the Chinese officer and my old friend the horse dealer appeared to say good-bye. The Chinese Resident had sent one of his red visiting cards as an "adieu" in true Chinese form, the exact opposite to our English custom of leaving p.p.c. cards.

The horse dealer rode with me through Urga, and only left me when we had cleared the town and reached the foot of the Berg-Altai Pass. I was sorry to say good-bye to my friendly fellow-traveller during the last month, and certainly never thought that the next time I saw him would be in a horse dealer's yard near Peking, some months afterwards, during the Chinese Revolution.

Between Urga and Kiachta on the direct road there are nearly 250 miles, or twelve stages to be covered. Once having negotiated the Berg-Altai Pass, the stage road passes through valley after valley of most delightful country. The sides of these valleys are wooded; grass grows everywhere; streams cross and recross; and the very appearance of the troops of horses, flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle testify to the fine quality of the grazing.

The crossing of the Berg-Altai Pass was dis-

agreeable in the extreme. Though it was July the cold was so great that feet and hands became quite numbed. Some of the few travellers that I met had resource to fur coats, and wisely so. I was on the road again, and looked forward with pleasure to my days of riding, changing horses every 10 miles or so. Whether it be by rail, motor, horse, or foot, there is a fascination of the road that is met with nowhere else. But of all these forms of travelling, that by horse and foot in little-known places is perhaps the most perfect. One could now understand to some extent the journeys of one's forefathers in England itself, for the posting there must have been much the same as the stage travelling in this part of Northern Mongolia.

Occasionally one met en route travelling Russians driving in their tarantass with two or three ponies, a great many bullock carts, an occasional Chinese official or courier hurrying on his way, and a few tramps and various Mongols. At night we slept in some Mongol hut, at the various stages.

Once or twice I passed large boards on posts signifying the boundary of some Chinese colonist's land, looking for all the world like imitations of the "Keep off the grass" notices seen in public parks at home.

A MONGOL AMAZON

Riding a little way up these valleys one could spot the neat wooden Chinese houses, the homes of the colonists, and see a few acres of land in the valley with a crop of some cereal; otherwise the country was grass and woods. Once when I rode up to the Mongol encampment where I was to pass the night, I was met by a young sunburnt European. He turned out to be a Russian, eighteen years old, who had gone through the Oriental school at Moscow and was now perfecting himself in the Mongol tongue, living with the Mongols,—an efficient, if somewhat disagreeable method of learning the language, which I do not think would much appeal to the British student interpreter in China.

I had with me letters written from the Mongolore Company permitting me to visit the Yero mines, which mines are situated on the Yero River some miles to the east of this north and south stage road. I was quite uncertain as to whether I could go there; to be perfectly frank, I was rather afraid of branching off the main road across country into the unknown without a Mongolian interpreter and guide. Still I was very keen to see the development of the mineral wealth of Outer Mongolia, and also to look upon some of the country away from the main route. The question of money, too, was

rather an anxiety. I had been running short of this commodity, and was beginning to make complicated calculations as to whether I had enough to see me back to Peking. (In Urga I found that my dollars were at a discount, and that roubles were the current coin, and I had mostly dollar notes with me.) However, I was inclined to risk my wife bringing sufficient funds with her to pay for my journey when I met her at Verhne Udinsk station. I had decided, therefore, to trust to luck to obtaining an interpreter en route, and as it happened my luck was kind to me. I was nearing stage No. 4 on the road when I fell in with a troupe of Chinese play-actors travelling to Urga to act during the Urga Fair,—a curious party, cheery and happy-go-lucky, and not really very unlike a provincial theatrical company one may meet any day on Sunday in England travelling by train from one town to another.

I had just bid this lot good-bye, and was continuing my journey, when I overheard my servant, who was riding behind, profuse in his welcome to some other Chinese. I knew it could not be the play-actors, as Chinese despise them, and he had not been too pleased with the idea of me stopping and talking to the troupe, and so I supposed it must be a friend whom he had met.

The mystery was shortly solved when he brought up two Chinese. They turned out to be two relatives, who had come up to Mongolia to colonise. They had been in the country some years, and owing to the lack of capital had not so far been very successful. Still they hoped that now they had turned the corner. In course of conversation I mentioned to one of them my wish to go to the Yero mines, and hazarded the request that he should go with me. He spoke Mongolian fluently and knew the country, and when he readily assented I realised that my troubles, as far as a Mongolian interpreter and guide went, were at an end. He proposed branching off with me from the main road, striking the first mines, following them up along the banks of the Yero, and then cutting back to the main stage road for the North only a few stages from Kiachta. He could arrange, he told me, to leave his own pony, which he was riding, at the next stage, and by using my "Chih I" obtain ponies from troop of horse to troop of horse, until we again returned to the main route.

On arrival at the stage where we were to change horses we were advised to press on over the Ha-la River to the next stage, to stay the night there, and then branch off across country from there to the mines. The Ha-la River, they told us, was

swollen, and there would be difficulty in crossing it or its tributaries anywhere but at the rough ferry on the main route, so on we went. When we got to the Ha-la it was in flood. We unhitched and unsaddled the horses, and driving them into the stream let them take their own chance of swimming across to the opposite side, where we hoped to catch them. We ourselves soon bundled the cart on to a raft made of hollowed trees, with planks across it; the current was swift and the stream broad, and it was with no little difficulty that we landed some hundreds of yards down stream. On arrival at the far side of the Ha-la, having caught the horses, saddled and hitched them into the cart, we went to the collection of Mongol yurts which formed stage No. 5.

Here again, in the hut I was given, were evidences of a Russian student of the Mongol language. Two of his boxes were in the yurt, and I was told he was away shooting. From the very offensive smell in the yurt and from further investigation I concluded that he must have been an ornithologist; in any case he had been trying to stuff two huge vultures. In the end, I suggested that they should move the whole yurt to another site, as I saw that it would be quite impossible to stay the night there. We arranged that the

CROSSING THE YERO RIVER ON A RAFT MADE OF HOLLOWED TREES

cart should be left with the greater part of the baggage and proceed by easy journeys to stage 6, where we hoped we should pick it up within a week. It would have been impossible to take it with us across country, and consequently we had to leave it to the tender mercies of the Mongols at the stage.

We arranged for a pack animal to travel with us next morning, to carry our bedding and a few stores. I was rather amused that evening in watching a very small Mongol boy being instructed in reading Tibetan characters of a religious kind from a small book. He was destined to become a Lama, and was certainly beginning his education early, and sing-songed away at his chant as if he had been at a service in a Lama's temple.

It was on the 27th June that we left No. 5 t'ai at an early hour in the morning. Our party consisted of my Chinese servant, the former colonist who spoke Mongolian, and a Mongol who led the pack animal. We rode due east, striking a most fertile valley. The grasses of this country were nearly all the same as one finds in "upland" hay in England, such as "sheep's fescue," "cock's foot," sweet vernal, clover, Italian rye, and wild oat; and the valley gave grazing to large herds of beasts, troops of horses, and flocks

of sheep. After we had been riding for three hours we met a Chinese colonist who took us to his house. He farmed about 100 ching[1] of land, and the farm had been under cultivation for about fifteen years.

His house was a large one, especially compared with those of Chinese farmers in their own country; with a fine courtyard, range of farm buildings, granaries full to overflowing, etc. In the central room, which might have been the large outside kitchen of an English farmhouse, built of wood, we were greeted by all his Chinese assistants and regaled with cakes and tea.

The majority of these settlers come from the province of Shansi in North China, and in no single case did I find they had brought their families with them. As a rule, when they begin to prosper, they return to their Chinese homes once every three years, and look forward eventually to retiring and returning to the Flowery Land. They cannot therefore be called colonists in the true sense of the word. The Mongol is absolutely unfitted for and averse to tilling the ground; he is of no use to the Chinese colonist from the point of view of labour in the fields, therefore it is necessary that the Chinese bring their labour with them, and this

[1] 1 ching = 900 mou. 1 mou = one-sixth of an English acre.

A CHINESE COLONIST'S HOUSE

they do in the shape of assistants, usually relatives, who, as far as I could ascertain, are paid on the co-operative or partner system. They employ the Mongols for tending their troops of ponies, herds of cattle, etc., but not as servants. The majority of colonists I saw seemed to be prospering amazingly; their houses were excellent, their stack-yards, woodyards, and granaries were full, and in many cases they were using modern machines for sifting the husks from the ear of grain. Year by year they manage to enlarge their holdings. Many of these large farms are capitalised by merchants in Urga, who either sublet the farms on some arrangement as to the division of produce, or else put in a manager or bailiff. Here, as in most cases, the failures can be attributed to the man with small capital. Still even the small man, if he be lucky enough to choose good ground and has good seasons to start on, prospers.

The land is rented by the Chinese colonist from the Mongolian prince interested; he has the choice of land, and pays the equivalent to about four dollars, or eight shillings, a ching a year in rent. He has the option of holding the land in perpetuity at this rental. All disputes are decided by the officials at Urga. The grain is sold in Urga and

Kiachta, but it seemed to be of a poorer quality than the Chinese product.

Since the Declaration of Independence it has been decided on the advice of the Russians to allow these Chinese colonists to remain in Mongolia. They are to be taxed to some extent, but otherwise unmolested.

On changing horses, which we did every few miles, when we came across a good troop the Mongols rode amongst the troop and lassoed the animals they wanted with the device I mentioned having seen used in the desert. One troop of horses we met was a very large one. I started to count them, but after I had reached 900 I gave up the attempt. At the huts we passed by in the valley there was wool in all stages, and the inmates of the huts down to the smallest children were sorting, beating, and carding the heaps of wool; one little old Mongol lady with grey hair seemed full of smiles and humour, and was very courteous when I spoke to her through an interpreter. Cheerfulness is the characteristic of these Mongols—cheerfulness, kindness, and hospitality combined, as is often the case in other parts of the world, with laziness.

We passed rapidly on to another valley, at the end of which we came upon another large prosperous-

CARDING WOOL
The Mongols make their felt from wool and horse-hair

looking farmhouse surrounded with growing crops. As we entered the courtyard we saw some of the Chinese assistants passing oats through a machine to clean them. In the granary there were great stores of oats. This farm, I was told, had been in the present occupier's hands for upwards of twenty years. There were seventeen Chinese assistants employed on it.

The ride was most exhilarating; nothing seemed to matter but the fact that there was a good pony between one's legs and a lovely country to ride through. Where we were going to sleep or eat seemed to pass from one's thoughts, so engrossing was the country and the riding. The weather, too, was perfect; and the sun, just sufficiently shaded by the white-barked birch and Scotch firs, was delicious. The woods through which we rode were carpeted with wild flowers; many of the English varieties could be recognised, and there were quantities of lilies, Shirley poppies, wild roses, larkspurs, orange-coloured ranunculus, stone pinks, blue vetches, etc.

We were now making straight out of the valley by a great wood, and in this wood we continued our ride until dark. Eventually as we emerged I saw a light as it were from camp-fires, and riding up, found small log huts inhabited by Chinese

miners busily preparing a meal. These were some of the confrères of the miners I had met in the Gobi Desert. We passed over a small tributary of the Yero River by an insecure bridge, and came to two or three wooden huts, which were occupied by Russian overseers of this first small mine. By means of my Mongol interpreter we were directed by one of the Russians another mile up the river to the accountant's hut. He received us very hospitably. Here he lived with his wife, and when I entered the hut a samovar was gaily singing on the table, and bread, cakes, and meat were spread. Round the table were five or six Russian overseers of the mine. They all treated me very hospitably; one of them was able to speak a few words of English and a little Chinese.

After I had done justice to the supper they took me round to a long hut divided into cubicles, each with a wooden board bed. I had not lain down for more than half an hour, and certainly was beginning to feel the cold, when one of these Russians, a huge bearded giant, came in with a lamp, and without a word very gently covered me up with a great opossum rug and then as quietly went out again. It was a little attention to a total stranger that I much appreciated.

I was up betimes the next morning, the 28th,

MINING ON THE YERO RIVER UNDER RUSSIAN SUPERVISION

and after an early breakfast with the accountant of the mine I went down to the scene of the mining operations. They were washing, etc., for gold. The Chinese miners, under the superintendence of a Russian, dug the dirt, and this was taken to a sluice to be washed. Occasionally a nugget was picked up by the diggers. Three times a day they open the trap of the sluice and take out and wash the dust. This is done in the presence of all the miners who have fed the sluice, and in the presence of the Russian overseer. The gold is then placed in an envelope and sealed by the Chinese foreman and the Russian, and then taken by the Russian to the accountant's office, when it is duly weighed and bought at a fixed price by the Mongolore Company. The price paid is credited to the Chinese gang. At each mine there is a Chinese "yamen" and two civilian officials and Chinese policemen.

These men keep order amongst the Chinese miners, see that they are treated fairly, and keep an eye on the amount of gold found, in order that the Chinese Government are not defrauded of their due percentage. Since the Declaration of Independence many of these Chinese miners have left, but the tax is still collected and paid to the Mongol authorities for the Mongol Govern-

ment. The Chinese officials and policemen have naturally been banished. The Mongolore Company, in addition to paying for the gold at a fixed rate, also supply the Chinese miners with food, shelter, and appliances for obtaining and washing the gold.

Later in the day I started for the main Yero mine, which was some 20 miles farther on. The ride there was one of the loveliest I had so far taken. The climate again was absolutely perfect, and the track lay up and down hill, through woods alternating with long stretches of grass land bordered on one side by forests, and on the other by the Yero River. In the woods the birch, pine, oak, elm could be recognised—once in the middle of a wood by the side of the road I saw a curiously built wigwam made of dry branches some 12 feet high. This was covered with little offerings, pieces of cloth, leather, etc.; it was a little temple in the woods, where travelling Mongols left offerings to their Hu-tuk-tu. Eventually signs of mining were seen. A stream had been diverted from its course, and hundreds of Chinese coolies were busy digging up the earth in its original bed. There were more sluices for washing this alluvial, and as we neared the main mining centre we saw Russian style houses built of wood.

We rode up to the manager's house, a large wooden building which formed one side of a grass-covered courtyard and overlooked the river, while offices, a general shop presided over by Chinese, and laboratory for the extraction of the gold, etc., formed the other three sides. Here I was hospitably entertained by Mr. Henri, the manager of the mine. A German naturalised Russian, and an engineer, he seemed to be making a success of this gold-mining concern. The concern has had its ups and downs; originally Mr. von Grotte,[1] who was in the Chinese Customs, obtained a concession from the Mongolian princes concerned for gold-mining in North Mongolia. He apparently started with American machinery, and eventually by using Chinese labour he managed to make a success of the venture, and when I was there the concern was paying large dividends.

Gold there is in very large quantities. The gold is all obtained by dredging and washing. In all there are seven mines working, and very large numbers of

[1] Since the Declaration of Independence by the Mongols, Mr. von Grotte has retired from the management of this mine; and during these troublous times in Mongolia the mines have not been paying well, chiefly owing to the flight of many of the Chinese miners, and the inability to obtain labour in their place. Once things are settled in Mongolia, it is confidently expected that this mining society will again pay large dividends, and it is hoped that further mines may be opened in this rich mineral country.

Chinese are employed in the works, supervised by Russians. Electric machinery was to be erected for smelting purposes, and altogether the mining operations seemed very prosperous. The Company is a Russian one, and most of the capital is Russian. The area for mining seemed almost unlimited, and prospectors are always employed trekking over the country.

The gold once smelted and formed into ingots is dispatched viâ Kiachta to the Trans-Siberian Railway. In the wooded mountains, Mr. Henri told me there was good shooting, and that goat, stag, and bear are easily obtained, with wild boar in the valleys, and trout in the river. It would appear that this country would be an ideal one for a shooting trip. I can myself testify to the pheasants seen during my rides through the woods. I went over the working with Mr. Henri and saw the smelting process. It was all well managed. The next day, 29th June, Mr. Henri's wife and two boys of seven and eight years arrived quite unexpectedly from Irkutsk. Madame Henri was very hospitable, and pressed me to stay yet another night, which I did. She had travelled viâ Kiachta in a Russian tarantass using the mine t'ai,[1] and must have had a rough journey; but she certainly

[1] T'ai means a stage.

WASHING GOLD ON THE YERO RIVER

was rewarded by finding so charming a spot as the Yero mine to live in once she had arrived there.

I left on the 30th, and rode through much the same country as before, making for a stage on the Russian mine t'ai from which I hoped to strike the main official stage route again. I had calculated we should manage this in one day's journey, but unfortunately it was not possible. By nightfall we were in the woods, and still some miles from the Mongolore Company's stage I was aiming for, and it was very late at night when we arrived there on very tired horses. I could obtain nothing to eat; the manager of the t'ai had lost his wife, and in consequence of the mourning, so I was told by my interpreter, the Mongol would sell no food. I had left my few remaining tins of meat at the mine as they were short. I had to make shift with a hunch of bread and condensed milk, which I shared with a Russian prospector who rode up while I was there, looking more like a brigand than anything else with his belt bristling with knives and revolvers. He produced a bag of tea, and so we made our meal together in a filthy Mongol tent which had lately been used for curing hides. The disagreeableness can easily be imagined. It was a relief to get out of it early the next morning. The

horses were tired, we had been unable to change them, and we were all half starved, but we started our march along the banks of the Yero River across country for No. 9 stage on the main official route.

CHAPTER XI

THE YERO GOLD MINES TO VERHNE UDINSK VIA KIACHTA[1]

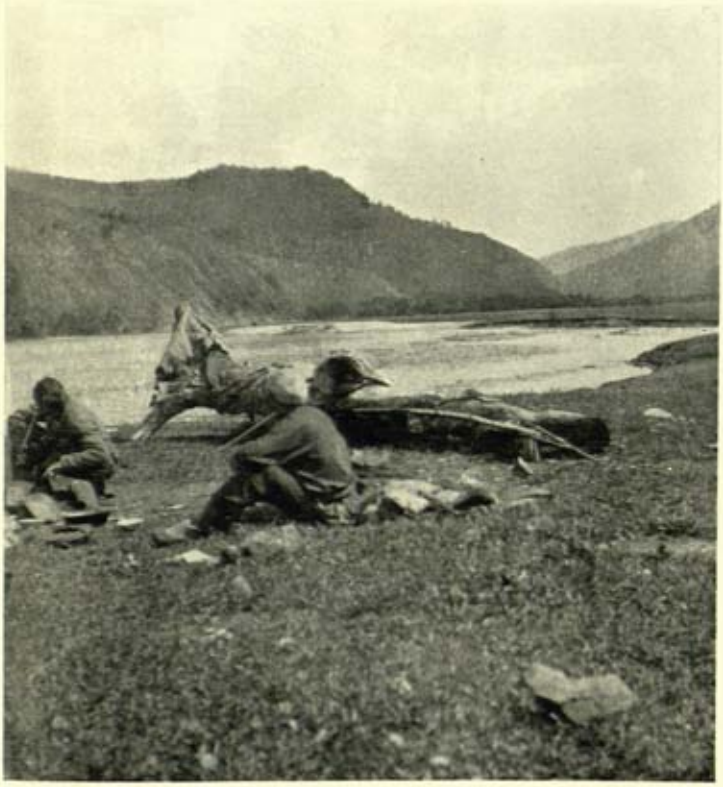
TO No. 9 stage on the main road along the Yero River was some 35 miles. My baggage was to await me at No. 6 stage, but I decided to ride the 35 miles up the river, and on arrival at No. 9 stage send back for my baggage cart. The journey along the river bank seemed interminable. With the greatest difficulty, half-way on our journey my interpreter managed to obtain some flour at a yurt occupied by a Chinaman and his Mongol wife. Here we broke our fast on chuppaties, which my servant made for me, and liquid butter. This was the first time I had come across a Chinaman living with a Mongol. He told me he had come up to farm, but having lost his capital with a succession of bad years, he now lived as a Mongol and worked for a Mongol prince, tending his herds. That afternoon we passed a small lamasery built on the side of

[1] Extracts from Captain Otter-Barry's Diary.

the valley, where troops of horses and herds of cattle were being tended by the priests. In the evening, after crossing the river in a ferry, we reached stage No. 9. The interpreter volunteered to ride the three stages to stage No. 6 and bring back the baggage, so I had to wait here until his return.

In this northern portion of my journey I came across several Russian colonists, and along this last stretch of 35 miles I visited two or three of their farms. Their farms lack the look of prosperity of the Chinese colonists, and in conversation I had with one or two of them their failures were attributed to lack of labour. I understood that under the Chinese régime they were not treated by the officials on the same terms as the Chinese colonist. This can easily be understood, and it may be hoped that now Mongolia is independent the Russian colonists may find it easier to succeed.

At the same time it must be borne in mind that the Chinese are a people eminently fitted for the tilling of the ground. They live very cheaply, are very hard working, and can import their labour at a nominal cost. The Russian has to depend on the Mongol for his labour, and the Mongol as an agriculturalist is useless. It also seems probable that



A VIEW ON THE YERO RIVER

Russia, having so large a field still available in her own country for the enterprising Russian colonist, is not able to send her best men to Mongolia. China, on the contrary, is over-populated, every particle of land in China is intensely cultivated, the prospects therefore of colonising in Mongolia must appeal far more strongly to the Chinese than to the Russian. There was one Russian farm on the banks of the Yero that was prosperous; a combination of dairy farming and vegetable growing seemed to be a success. The Russian colonist in this case was an exceptional man, and had imported a special breed of cattle. The land he had chosen was also in a very fertile valley.

While I was waiting for the interpreter to return I sat down near the ferry and watched the travellers hurrying along the stage road. A Russian or two, obviously merchants, passed in a tarantass, one or two rode by on horseback. Chinese couriers hurriedly rode past, getting over their journey as quickly as possible, many of them covering as much as 100 miles a day; and a few Mongols, not allowed to use the stage horses, ambled by at their even pace, at which they would cover miles of country on one horse. Very noticeable was the air of superiority assumed by the Chinese, as if they wished to impress on all that they were the ruling race.

The Russian and Mongolian almost fraternised, but the Chinese traveller treated the Russian with almost the same scant courtesy as he dealt out to the unfortunate Mongol. My interpreter, who returned with the baggage at 8 p.m., having covered 140 miles in twenty-six hours, was quite game to go on that night, and so I decided to make at once for stage 10, and so get to Kiachta on the next day, the 3rd July.

A little Mongol boy not more than eleven years old drove our cart, and at 8.30, as the twilight fell, we crossed the ferry. A little shrivelled Mongol woman took us over in the ferry, and well she managed the boat against the strong current. We had all to wade to get to the ferry, and the cart was run up on two planks, and the ponies had to jump as best they could from the water into the boat. The road lay through woods, and the going was very bad, and in the dark we could only get along at all by going at a walk.

After some hours we reached a swollen stream which divided us from stage 10 and our night's shelter. Leaving the cart I rode to some huts, and at last got a hearing from the inmates. The man refused to move at that hour to show us the ford, but he was obliging enough to kick his wife out of bed to go with us. Poor little woman, she came

out barefooted in nothing but her chemise! When she got to the ford she was about to wade across on foot; but this was more than I could stand, so I jumped off my pony and gave her a leg up on to the animal. Luckily it was pitch dark! our Mongol "Lady Godiva" rode across, the cart and ponies followed, and she brought back a led pony for me to ford the stream. Once across we knocked up the stage manager, and here we all slept in one yurt, the interpreter, my servant, the Mongol driver, the stage manager, his wife, our "Lady Godiva," and a brace or two of Mongol children of both sexes.

By 3 a.m. I had enough of that atmosphere; and waking up my interpreter, stuffed some bovril and bread into my pockets, caught and saddled our two horses, and rode away as the day was dawning for Kiachta, leaving the cart and the rest to follow on how they liked. The Mongolians are a very primitive people as regards their way of living. I think they are really far too natural to imagine anything improper in young and old of both sexes sleeping together. It's a case of "Honi soit qui mal y pense," and if you travel in Mongolia you must do as the Mongol does.

I reached stage 11 at 7.40 a.m., where we breakfasted, and then rode the five or six miles on to

Kiachta. We rode through woods all being cut down in an indiscriminate way for firewood and building, and a few miles from the town could see Kiachta, which is built on the side of a hill. Through field-glasses at this distance it looked a curious place, an odd mixture of Mongol yurts, Chinese houses, and Russian brick and wooden houses, with a high Russian church, and barracks standing well out. Here, indeed, East and West could be said to meet. On the lower ground were the Mongol yurts, then a few Chinese houses, then the Chinese walled city, the "Maimaichen" as it is called, and beyond the frontier the Russian houses began, the well-laid-out gardens, the churches, barracks, and a long street of shops. Here were three distinct races all living together in a small space. This picture seen through glasses summed up in my mind the situation even better than Urga. The effete but ancient race, the highly civilised race which has marked time for hundreds of years, and the virile half-Western, half-Eastern race, whose power yearly increases, all camped next to each other. I rode on through the gates of the Chinese walled city to the Chinese post office. My journey across Mongolia had been completed.

Chinese Kiachta, or Maimaichen (market-place) as it is called, before the Declaration of Independence

of Mongolia was a flourishing little Chinese walled city, with a prosperous population of some 1000 Chinese, mostly merchants, who carried on a trade with the Mongols in cloth, ironware, tea, sugar, silk, etc. Now the majority of the Chinese merchants have closed their shops, and the place has a deserted appearance. The Chinese telegraph station here for Urga-Peking has passed into the hands of the Mongols, and a Mongolian, Mr. Che, is the director. He also acts as *Tifang Kuan* (magistrate) in place of the banished Chinese official. So far the Chinese post office has not been interfered with, and still continues under Chinese management. Here also are small trading concerns managed by Russians. At Troitze-Casavsk, which joins Kiachta, there is a Russian Custom-house. The rules at present in force are roughly as follows :—

On Russian goods entering Mongolia there is no tax charged. On Mongolian native produce (ponies, cattle, wool, and skins) there is no tax charged.

On Mongolian goods, such as silk, tea, hand-made articles and Chinese products, there is a very heavy charge levied according to the Russian-European tariff. The Russian frontier commissioner is Colonel Hitrovo. There is also at Russian

Kiachta the office of the Northern Telegraph Company, operated by a Danish gentleman. They have the working of a through line to Peking. Here also in Russian Kiachta are a few residences of Russian merchants, and the new barracks, which are capable of holding some 15,000 men. There are said to be sixty Mongol soldiers in Mongolian Kiachta, who took the place of the thirty Chinese soldiers after the Declaration of Independence. Exclusive of soldiers, there are not above 1000 inhabitants in Russian Kiachta.

A few versts farther north is Troitze-Casavsk. This is essentially a Russian town, and boasts a large church, hotel, and schools, all built of stone. The Russian officials live here. The main street is full of large Russian shops; there is a market-place and a cinematograph theatre. When the tea trade was at its height the Russian tea millionaires lived here, and traces of them can still be seen in the large houses, well-laid-out public gardens, and a large school. All the business men are anxiously awaiting developments in Mongolia from this northern gate; and the day when the railway from Lake Baikal to Peking viâ Kiachta and Urga is completed is looked upon by them as the day when their fortunes will surely rise. The manager of the Northern Telegraph Company was very hospitable, and I was

frequently with him looking at the barracks and the churches, and learning something of the trade conditions. My visit was before the Declaration of Independence by Mongolia, but I gathered the impression from all sources that it would only be a question of time and opportunity before Russia had the control of Mongolia. All seemed agreed that the Mongols could not in any way govern themselves. Most people expected that it would take the form of a Russian advance in force against China in Mongolia.

The manager of the Northern Telegraph Company arranged for a tarantass to take me on the evening of the 7th July to Ust Kiachta, some 23 versts away, from which place I was to go by river steamer up the Selenga to Verhne Udinsk. The cost of the tarantass was very small, only one rouble ninety-five kopecks. In mentioning this charge it is rather interesting to note that even now the Russian Government follows the system of Peter the Great, and pays its officials their travelling expenses in Russia at the rate of three kopecks per horse per verst, whether there is a train service or not. The number of horses allowed varies according to the rank of the official, and to some distant parts of Siberia from St. Petersburg an official of high rank entitled to six or eight horses per verst

would claim as much as 4000 roubles. The official is also entitled to "leave" reckoned on the time it would take him to go by road, so it can be imagined that an official would take his leave, say in Moscow or St. Petersburg, and then give himself ten days to get by train to his post in Siberia—a charming method for the Government official.

Firearms require special permission to enter Russia here, so I hid my gun rolled up in my bedding, an unnecessary precaution as it happened, because my baggage was passed through on the road in its cart with only a cursory glance. At the Northern Telegraph Office I transferred myself and servant and baggage to the two-horse tarantass. The 23 versts to the river bank were the most uncomfortable I had so far covered; whichever way I wedged myself in, I was like a pea on a drum. The springless tarantass, like a victoria without springs, over rough roads was abominable. I would have gladly got out and ridden one of the animals bareback after a very few versts had I had the face to do so.

On arrival at the Selenga we boarded the steamer. I went second-class for seven roubles seventy kopecks, and very comfortable it was. The journey takes twenty-six hours up-stream and fifteen hours

down-stream, and steamers should run every day during the summer. In winter the river is frozen, and the stage road is the only route. The journey up-stream was delightful. We stopped promiscuously to take up or put down passengers. Peasants came down to the steamer selling milk, eggs, etc. On board were some Russian officers of the 21st Siberian Regiment, who were to take part in some manœuvres along the valley. And at one place we took on a few cavalry. The cargo consisted of wool, tea, and skins.

The country in this valley was very fertile ; farms could be spotted here and there on either bank, and there were many herds grazing. We passed the small village of Selenginsk, and on the night of the 8th arrived at Verhne Udinsk. Here I drove to the Hotel Siberia, which was expensive, and quite as bad as a village inn in England. I took my Chinese servant up to the station and sent him off by a slow Russian train to Peking to get things ready for me on my return, and resigned myself to another two days in this inn.

Verhne Udinsk was quite an ordinary Russian town, owing its importance to its being the link to the railway with the road into Mongolia, and the fact of it having a large garrison. There are a few brick buildings, but most of the houses

are of wood. There are one or two Chinese shops, which sell tea and Chinese goods. The Chinese walking in the town seemed to me to put on insufferable airs, their contact with Europeans apparently not improving their usually courteous manners.

I was told by a French lady on whom I called, and also by her brother-in-law the Commissioner of the Police, that even if I drove to the camp where the garrison was, I should probably be turned away, as I was a foreigner. However, I drove out there, and, leaving my carriage, strolled into the camp. It was a very large permanent one, with wood-built cookhouse and institutes, the men themselves being in tents with wooden floors and sides, ten men to a tent. The staff had a brick building. The field guns were of a pattern of 1903 and 1906, and there was also a full pontoon section and two searchlight sections. I was much struck by the look of this Siberian Division, and I estimated their numbers at upwards of 15,000 men. The guns were in first-class order, and the camp was well laid out. While I was looking at some of the guns, which were parked behind the tents, I was challenged by a sentry, who took me off to explain to higher authority why I was there, etc. I was detained some little time; but the fact of my being an

Englishman disarmed them of any suspicion as to my intentions, and I was allowed to go away. Had I been any nationality but a Britisher, I should, I think, have fared considerably worse. At the railway station there were ten sidings for the entraining of troops and various shunting lines, forty-five engines, and a great deal of rolling stock, all kept here in anticipation of trouble, to facilitate a quick movement of the troops.

At Irkutsk and at Chita there are reported to be large garrisons, and in these regions alone the total military strength amounts in all to about 130,000 to 150,000 of all arms. So Russia has learned her lesson from the Japanese War, and does not intend to be found unprepared again. Before the Japanese War there were practically no troops in the whole of the Transbaikalia. It seems a question whether the route when the railway is built will be from Lake Baikal or Verhne Udinsk. The latter would be easier of construction along the Selenga Valley, but the former would bring Urga and eventually the East a day nearer to Europe.

On the morning of the 12th July I was early at the Verhne Udinsk Railway station, 3 versts from the town. At last the huge engine of the International train, belching out clouds of smoke from the wood fuel, slowly ground its way to the station

and my wife jumped down from the train. We had met at the exact time, date, and place that we had arranged months before. She had travelled some 7000 miles by train, I had travelled some 1200 miles on horse and foot.

CHAPTER XII

SHANGHAI TO URGA BY RAIL AND TARANTASS[1]

WHILST making preparations to leave Shanghai for England on a year's leave, it occurred to me that Monsieur Korostovetz, the special Russian Plenipotentiary in Mongolia, whose acquaintance I had made at Peking, where he was Russian Minister for several years, had invited me to visit him at Urga in Mongolia, if ever the opportunity arose.

Accordingly I wrote to him that I would gladly come if he would send me full directions to Moukden, telling me exactly how to get to Urga.

I left Shanghai on the 16th of February 1913, and proceeded to Peking by way of the Shanghai-Nanking, and Pukow-Tientsin Railways, crossing the river Yangtze by ferry from Nanking to Pukow.

I spent a week at Peking. It was interesting to note the changes that had taken place since I lived

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

in the capital. I had left Peking for Moukden in Manchuria in October 1911, at a time when the Revolution was commencing. In the steps of the Revolution had followed in rapid succession the reinstatement of Yuan Shih Kai, the abdication of the Manchu reigning house, the inauguration of the Republic, the visit of the Nanking delegates, the mutiny of Yuan's trusted troops, the sack and looting of some of the wealthiest streets in Peking, the restoration of order by Chang Kuei ti's Manchu troops from Tungchow, the subsequent executions and parading of heads where the looting had taken place, and the demonstration march on the part of the allied troops made, at the request of the Chinese officials, to restore confidence to the masses.

Many changes, too, I noticed amongst the personnel of the legations and foreigners resident in the capital. In the Far East one has but to leave a place for six months or a year to find, on returning, that people have come and gone, and that one is almost a stranger. The detachment of Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who had been acting as legation guard during my sojourn in Peking, had been replaced by the Somerset Light Infantry, who in turn had been succeeded by the South Wales Borderers. Dr. Morrison, whom I had known as the *Times* correspondent, was now the Political Adviser to the

H.E. MONSIEUR J. KOROSTOVETZ
RUSSIAN MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY AT PEKING, CHINA, 1907-1912
" " " " URGA, MONGOLIA, 1912-1913
" " " DESIGNATE AT TEHERAN, PERSIA

President of the Chinese Republic. It was largely as the result of a talk that I had with Dr. Morrison that I decided eventually to make my journey through Mongolia, which is the main subject of this narrative.

From Peking I paid a visit to friends at Shanhaikuan, a town situated at a point where the Great Wall of China starts from the sea on its mighty journey to encircle the vast domains of the Empire. This wall was built hundreds of years ago to act as a barrier against the outer barbarians from Mongolia and Manchuria, and now possesses peculiar and almost pathetic attraction in view of Russian and Japanese activity in Manchuria, and the Mongolian independence so lately recognised by Russia.

From Shanhaikuan I went to Moukden, the capital of Manchuria, and the ancient seat of the Manchu dynasty.

In view of my projected trip to Mongolia, I was interested to hear that there were all sorts of vague rumours and reports afloat to the effect that three Army Corps were to invade Mongolia at the same time.

Certainly preparations were well to the fore, and there was every indication that troops were being equipped and fitted for the field.

Here I heard from Mr. Korostovetz that he would be glad to see me at Urga; he warned me,

however, that the journey was a difficult one, and that I must bring plenty of stores, wear warm furs, and come well armed.

Mr. Kolokolov, the Russian Consul-General, was most kind in assisting me in every possible way. He gave me an official letter, written in Russian, calling on Russian officials to render me every assistance in getting to Urga, and, of course, viséd my passport. He also sent a telegram to Mr. Korostovetz, on my behalf, stating the day on which I hoped to arrive at Verhne Udinsk, in order that he might send somebody to meet me—a precaution that subsequently proved of the greatest assistance.

I travelled to Harbin by the South Manchurian Railway. From this line, near Moukden, one can see most of the country round which was fought the famous battle of Moukden in the Russo-Japanese War, including the Pei ling and Hsi ling —Chinese names for the northern and eastern mausolea where the ancestors of the Manchu dynasty are buried. These tombs are surrounded by thick woods, interspersed with grassy fields, which gave them an English park-land appearance. Mistletoe in large quantities is found amongst the branches of the trees.

At Changchun, or, as it is frequently called,

Kwanchengtze, the South Manchurian Railway system ends. Here one changes trains and proceeds to Harbin on the Chinese Eastern Railway, owned and controlled by the Russians.

I remained at Harbin for a couple of days, and spent the time buying stores, furs, etc., and endeavouring (in vain) to get ammunition for my revolver, in order to follow Mr. Korostovetz's instructions as to coming to Urga well armed.

From Harbin I travelled by the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchuria—the frontier station between China and Russia, where all luggage has to be examined before being allowed to enter Siberia.

From Manchuria I went by the daily express to Verhne Udinsk. There are no restaurant cars on these trains, and one has to study carefully the list of stations and note the times allowed for stopping, which range from two minutes upwards. Three bells are sounded, and when the second bell rings, even if one has just ordered a hot cup of coffee, it is advisable to bolt for the train, as on the third bell off the train goes and stops for nobody.

I caught a chill on the train, and had a bad sore throat, so on arrival at Verhne Udinsk I was very glad to be greeted by Monsieur Sells, the Assistant Chief of Police, who told me that

Monsieur Korostovetz had sent a wire asking that I be met and helped as much as possible on my journey.

M. Sells, who talked with me in French, as neither of us understood the other's language, took me to an hotel, and there I spent a most uncomfortable night, as my fever became worse and made it impossible for me to leave next morning for Kiachta as I had intended. Instead, I had to solicit his kind offices in getting a doctor, by name Dr. Lifkoff, who paid me two visits, and then ordered me off to the local Red Cross Hospital of which he was in charge. I was well wrapped up in furs and rugs, and made the short journey from the hotel to the hospital in a sleigh.

The hospital is maintained by the Government, and under peace conditions has a staff of two doctors, eleven nurses, and an equipment of forty beds. In time of war the doctors will be increased to five, and the beds to two hundred.

On admission I was given a room to myself, with a nice clean bed, in direct contrast to that provided at the hotel. My temperature was taken by the assistant surgeon, Dr. Petrofski, who spoke a few words of English; and after this was finished, and he had looked at my throat, tongue, etc., he solemnly informed me that certain treatment would

be prescribed which I had always associated with the severest form of dysentery.

I was rather surprised, and distinctly alarmed, as I thought that my maladies required quite different treatment. However, there was nothing for it but to wait, and to hope for the best; and to my great joy, I was given nothing more alarming than a gargle, and so concluded that the good doctor's English had got a bit confused.

I was a source of never-ending wonder to the nurses, who, I think, looked upon me as an utter barbarian for not being able to speak Russian. They were, however, kindness itself to me, especially sister Antonina, and during my four days of detention did their best to spoil me. I have nothing but praise for the kind and hospitable way in which I was treated.

As soon as I was well enough, I was given baths in a comfortable bathroom equipped with hot and cold water, such as one would find in an English hospital. Among fellow-patients I noticed Chinese, Mongols, and Russians. Those who could afford it had rooms like mine to themselves. The poorer patients were in clean, well-ventilated dormitories. When the doctor presented me with my "Quittance," as he called it, I found that it amounted to ten roubles, or £1 sterling, which, seeing that I had had

two visits from the doctor at the hotel, had been four nights in the hospital, and had received everything that the hospital could provide, including wine and game, was about as cheap a bill as one would have to pay anywhere in or out of Europe. The nurses, who are Sisters of Mercy, live in a little hostel by themselves, and were very bright and cheery. None of them could speak English, in fact Russian was their only tongue, so our efforts at conversation were rather involved. On leaving, I was asked to write something in the hospital visitors' book, and, looking through it, I saw that I was the first Englishman to be admitted as a patient. I wrote that the hospital was one of the nicest and best managed that I had ever been in. I must admit that my only other experience of a hospital was the West African Frontier Force Hospital at Lokoja in Northern Nigeria in 1900, so perhaps my praise does not carry much weight.

I took advantage of my convalescence at Verhne Udinsk to visit the prison, which is the largest building in the town, holding about 600 convicts,—men and women,—confined for every sort of crime from murder downwards.

The prisoners were in rooms some of which held as many as seventy, and seemed as comfortable as could be expected under such conditions. Dangerous

criminals, or those who had escaped and been re-captured, were confined in separate cells, and had fetters attached to their legs.

I was escorted round the prison by the Governor and the Assistant Chief of Police, who informed me that a few days previously, on the occasion of the Tercentenary of the accession of the Romanoff dynasty, several prisoners had been released. Some had already committed crimes, and been rearrested; others were at large. They therefore were both strong in their recommendations that I should be armed, and have an escort on my journey from Verhne Udinsk to Kiachta.

I had been unsuccessful in my efforts to obtain ammunition for my revolver at Moukden and Harbin, and on my pointing this out to M. Sells he was most kind in having my revolver cleaned and oiled, and furnished with cartridges. He also provided me with an escort in the shape of a police-man, armed with a rifle and a sword. The latter was a constant source of annoyance to its owner, the driver of the tarantass in which we travelled to Kiachta, and myself,—accommodation was very limited, and it kept getting into everybody's way. We met no escaped prisoners, and had no ad-ventures. The route lay for the most part along the frozen bed of the river Selenga. We were from

two to three days on the journey, and stopped for the nights at Russian inns, where nothing was provided except hot water in a samovar. I had no bed with me, so slept on the floor. Insects of all sorts and sizes kept me company, so my slumbers were not sound.

At Kiachta I was hospitably entertained and assisted on my journey by Colonel Hitrovo, the Frontier Commissioner. I visited the telegraph and post offices. The telegraph line between Kiachta and Urga was taken over by the Mongols after the conclusion of the agreement with Russia in November 1912.

The Chinese post office has not been interfered with by the Mongols.

I left Kiachta on the 15th March 1913, and was accompanied by M. Popoff, a Russian gentleman proceeding to the Russian Consulate-General at Urga. We travelled in a large heavy carriage, made in the style of an artillery gun wagon, without any springs, and capable of much jolting and bumping.

The journey to Urga is divided into twelve stages. The first stage is made with three horses harnessed to the carriage, driven by a Russian driver. The remaining eleven stages are made in a style peculiarly Mongolian. To describe the procedure followed at the second stage will suffice for all. The horses are

unharnessed, and the Mongols attach a pole by ropes crossways to the shafts of the carriage. Then they mount their ponies, and two of them ride behind the pole—the latter resting against their stomachs. Six or more Mongols, including women and children, mounted and leading spare ponies, accompanied us, and at frequent intervals relieved one another. In this manner one is taken at a gallop up and down hills, valleys, plains, prairies, boulders, rocks, snow and ice; nothing comes amiss. It is a wild and nerve-racking experience.

When descending an especially steep hill, the carriage is taken sideways, with Mongols at hand on either side to prevent it toppling over; then, when about in the middle of the hill, Mongols, ponies, and carriage let themselves go, and off we dash, with a crashing and a jolting and a bumping over everything. I should imagine just such an experience when riding into action sitting on a gun carriage.

On arrival at the end of a stage, one pays an amount varying from three roubles upwards, produces one's *hu chao* or authority, and is handed over to the next stage. We passed three days and nights en route, and slept in Mongolian tents or yurts (made of felt and woodwork), which are most primitive and uncomfortable.

The last stage, as one approaches Urga, lies over very rocky and mountainous country. We climbed a steep mountain pass, the Berg-Altai, mounted on ponies, the road being too steep and tortuous for us to remain in the tarantass. The descent was down a path littered with stones and boulders, which gradually gave place to more level country, and, at last, to our great joy, we saw the top of the big Buddhist temple which denoted the proximity of Urga. A snowstorm was raging, and we were cold and miserable, so Urga was a very welcome sight. Our destination, the Russian Consulate-General, was, however, at the extreme eastern end of the city, so we had to drive through its entire length before we could really call the journey over.

CHAPTER XIII

URGA TO ULIASSUTAI[1]

I STAYED for more than a week as M. Korostovetz's guest, and visited the chief places of interest, and gathered as much information as I could regarding current events.

I considered myself very lucky to have the opportunity of seeing what was really happening in the much discussed city of Urga. At Peking, Moukden, and Harbin, people talked vaguely of Russia's dark and mysterious machinations; but nobody seemed to know anything reliable, because nobody had been recently to Urga.

The impressions of my visit have already appeared in Chapter VII. in conjunction with Captain Otter-Barry's experiences, and so there is no need here to dilate further on my sojourn in the Mongolian capital.

I left on 20th March for Uliassutai, in the western part of Mongolia, accompanying the Russian Consul-General at Urga, M. Louba.

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

With us were a student interpreter in Mongol, three Cossacks, and a petty official provided by the Mongolian Government. M. Louba was on a mission to Uliassutai and Kobdo, and had kindly asked me to journey with him.

The latest reports from both these places denoted that there was considerable danger of friction between the rival Chinese and Mongol armies encamped on opposite sides of the Altai mountains in the vicinity of Kobdo. The Chinese army, modern drilled and equipped, was said to number some 5000 strong, and was encamped at a place called Sagantunke on the south side of the Altai range, whilst the Mongol army of approximately the same strength was lying within 50 miles of Kobdo. In the face of these rumours, I was very glad to avail myself of the opportunity to see how matters really did stand in North-West Mongolia.

My travelling companion spoke no English and I spoke no Russian, so we conversed with one another in a mixture of Chinese and French.

He is well versed in Mongolia and its affairs, having spent a great part of his official career at Urga, Uliassutai, Kobdo, and Sharasume. He has also been Consul at Harbin and Kirin in Manchuria, and has a thorough knowledge of Manchu and Mongol. The Russian Minister, M. Korostovetz,

GROUP OF THE LEADING RESIDENTS AT URGA TAKEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEPARTURE OF M. LOUBA AND MR. PERRY-AYSCOUGH EN ROUTE FOR ULIASSUTAI AND KOBDO, MARCH, 1913

The Russian Consulate-General and the residence of the Russian Plenipotentiary are seen in the background. Immediately behind the group is the Tarantars in which the journey was made. On the right is a Guard of Honour of Russian-drilled Mongol Mounted Infantry with their Russian Instructor

(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

M. Popoff, who is M. Louba's locum-tenens at Urga, the Consular staff, merchants, and others, and a squadron of Mongolian cavalry with their Russian instructors, accompanied us to a place about two miles west of Urga, where a tent had been erected, and here M. Louba's health was toasted and brief speeches were made. A creditable exhibition of mounted infantry drill was then given by the Mongolian cavalry, and after that we started.

We passed the forest of San Geen, where excellent shooting is to be obtained ; and this was the last time we saw trees on our journey until we were quite close to Uliassutai. The route lay through country entirely devoid of timber. At each station, the chief of the station, attired in his official hat and wearing a glass button, rode out to meet us, dismounted, and made obeisance to M. Louba by kneeling on the ground, bowing his head, and lifting his hands to his mouth. He then escorted us to the yurts prepared for us, and next day either came himself or sent his assistant to escort us to the next station. The carriage we travelled in had been specially built for M. Louba at Verhne Udinsk. It was large and comfortable, and strongly put together. We were drawn in the usual Mongol style, ponies ridden by Mongols being placed behind the crossbar in front of the shafts, and other ponies being attached to the

carriage and the crossbars by means of ropes. Sometimes, when the stage was very difficult, we had to have the use of camels.

At the end of our first day's journey, as the night was cold, we had lit the stove which M. Louba carried with him when travelling. This caused the yurt to be very hot, and as my bed was next to the opening of the stove, I could not sleep well. Waking up from a brief doze, I saw the Mongol whose duty it was to stoke the fire (called the "gauchi"), sitting on a corner of my sleeping-bag, naked to his middle, engaged in an absorbing and exhaustive examination of his person. This was more than I could stand, so I started up with a shout which nearly sent the Mongol on to the stove, took one end of my valise and made the Mongol take the other, and hurriedly deposited myself and it in the centre of the adjoining yurt. I noticed that the ground seemed very bumpy and uneven, and next morning found that I had been sleeping on a pile of camel dung, with which fires in Mongolia are fed in place of coal.

The Mongols, as a rule, are not easily converted to Christianity. I did, however, hear of one case, at Urga, in which a Mongol was baptized and received into the Russian orthodox Church. Such an event, being somewhat exceptional, was made

the occasion for an imposing ceremony. At the beginning of the proceedings a procession was formed, headed by the Russian priest, who was followed by the Mongol convert in a state of nature except for a cloth round his loins. He was supported on either side by a Russian godfather and godmother. The procession had gone but a short distance when the cloth fell off. The situation was saved by the promptitude of the godmother, who produced a safety pin and adjusted the cloth. The Mongol was then placed in a large baptismal font, and the proceedings terminated with his receiving his baptism into the orthodox Church, and at the same time probably the first bath that he had ever had in his life.

To revert to my journey. The nights were exceedingly cold. If we kept the fires going all night, it was too hot; if we had no fires at all, it was too cold: it was impossible to hit the happy medium. One night, when there was a keen and penetrating wind blowing, I placed my sponge on a stool, within a foot of the fire, which was kept burning all night by the gauchi on duty. Next morning, on endeavouring to perform my ablutions, I found that the sponge was quite frozen. These efforts on my part to wash were the subject of wonder and amazement to the Mongols. I say efforts advisedly,

because a Mongol yurt is the most unsatisfactory creation that was ever made. You endeavour to stand up, and you hit your head against the rafter, or get overwhelmed with the smoke. You wriggle about on your bed, and your toothbrush, or soap, or your sponge, slide on the filthy floor. A yurt always seems to be built on an incline, consequently everything slides. The same applies to meals, which are eaten in a most uncomfortable manner. There are no tables and no chairs—only small stools.

Our route lay through a country consisting for the most part of broad plains, intersected by numerous ranges of hills and mountains, and traversed by rivers, large and small. The plains, when not covered by snow, afford excellent pasturage, with the appearance of rolling prairies. They are dotted with cattle of all kinds, one station alone possessing over 1000 ponies. We saw herds of antelope (called "zeren") sometimes in close proximity to the cattle. On two occasions we saw wolves. The first time the wolf was of the species called "Chani," and the next time it was an "Unik." Wild fowl, too, are found near the rivers.

Where the plains are under the snow there is no pasturage for the cattle, and the result is seen in the poor appearance of the ponies, which are weak

and out of condition for lack of food. The snow in the vicinity of Uliassutai was from three to four feet deep, and deviations from the track were attended with disaster.

The hills, which develop into mountains round Uliassutai, are very steep and rocky, being strewn with boulders and rocks of all sizes, which in places assume the most bizarre and picturesque appearance. The ascent of these hills is difficult, but the descent is perilous, and on more than one occasion we narrowly escaped accidents. Between Sherik and Sherat the road passes through a passage cut clean through the rocks. The rivers that we passed ("Gol" means river), which included the Tola, Ongingol, Gardingol, Tatengol, Tuyingol, Mindor (where gold-digging is carried on in a primitive way by the Mongols), Puyantugol, Tumetgol, Zagasti, and Bogdoingol, were for the most part covered with thick ice. In their immediate vicinity the river beds were strewn with boulders and small stones. To cross them was difficult, as the ice made the ponies liable to slip and fall down.

We came upon no towns; the only places apart from the stations worth mentioning being a big school for young Lamas near Girasantu at the end of the seventh stage, and the residence of

Prince Dalaigogun in the vicinity of Barutu in the tenth stage.

Travellers were scarce—a few camel caravans, a few Mongols on horseback, a Russian officer proceeding on leave from Uliassutai to Urga, and three Cossacks, two of whom had been bitten by dogs at Uliassutai, and were proceeding to the Pasteur Institute at Tomsk, uncertain as to whether the dogs were mad or not. The dogs of Uliassutai are most wild, and being accustomed to feed on human corpses, attack human beings with great ferocity.

We met no Chinese. The Russian travellers all spoke of the extreme difficulties that we should meet at the fourth stage from Uliassutai, where they said that the snow was deep. The Russian officer had had to walk for eight hours. We subsequently found that they had not exaggerated these difficulties. My companion frequently complained of the discomforts of the route, and expressed his opinion that it would be well for the high officials at St. Petersburg to undergo such a journey in order to realise the hardships that Russian officials in Mongolia have to endure. At first I thought that he was too pessimistic, but on the completion of the journey I was in thorough accord with him.

The Mongols who conduct the stages are simple, good-hearted people, and, as long as no special difficulties arise, carry one along splendidly. In cases of emergency they are useless. They are foolish, too, inasmuch as they will frequently change ponies at the pole when ascending or descending a hill, and on arrival at the top of an ascent will commence the descent without pausing to see if it is a precipice or not.

The journey consists of thirty-five stages, averaging approximately 1000 versts, which, reckoning one verst as equal to two-thirds of an English mile, makes about 700 miles. We took eleven and a half days, which was rather long. We would have been quicker had not the snow delayed us.

I do not intend to describe the events of each day in detail, but append hereunder a few extracts, which will give some indication of the conditions under which we travelled.

3rd April.—Between Olchoi and Utar (the twenty-third stage) passed a picturesque plain surrounded by hills and mountains covered with snow. Legend has it that this plain is the battlefield of Shande Manoru, where many hundreds of years ago the Mongols defeated the Chinese.

After leaving the battlefield, which is strewn with huge boulders, crossed the bed of the river Utangol,

and here one of the ponies fell down dead. We were going at full gallop, and rider narrowly escaped wheels of carriage. Long ride up hill in dark. Everybody very done. At last reached Olchoi. On the go for fourteen hours—6.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.

5th April.—Eleventh day of journey, thirty-first stage: Hugeert-Dagandaly, 20 versts. A most difficult stage, including crossing of four mountains covered with snow. On the third we nearly had bad adventure. We were descending decline on opposite side, when the carriage ran away with us. Mongols unable to control it. Luckily right front wheel stuck against large rock. If not, we should have been dashed to pieces. Great chaos. Mongols struggling with their horses. No Cossacks at hand. Jumped out quickly, made Mongols dismount. Took command of situation, and made Mongols wheel carriage down hill themselves. Hill was almost precipice. Saw a wolf (unik) on this stage. Thirty-second stage: Dagandaly-Tumurt, 35 versts. At it from 12 midday to 9 p.m. Most difficult stage yet met. Started off with two camels harnessed to carriage through thick snow. Carriage kept getting off track, and sticking in snow, which was three to four feet deep. Had to again direct operations, as Mongols were fools, and did nothing,

and the camels were worse. Eventually got to Tumurt with a mixed team of camels and ponies. We were all dead-beat. On the go for fourteen hours. A biting wind and snowstorm had got up in the afternoon, which had added to our troubles. My language, a medley of broken Chinese, Mongol, Russian, and forcible English, when trying to make the Mongols and their camels move, amused my companion very much. It was effective.

6th April.—Twelfth and last day. Thirty-third stage: Tumurt-Shorik, 30 versts. Late start after our fatiguing day yesterday. Road led along valleys covered with snow, and beyond Tumurt on the mountain side was a succession of forests—first trees that we have seen since leaving Urga. Scenery very pretty. Passed Russian merchant's store in very good position on river Puyantugol. Thirty-fourth stage: Shorik-Sherat, 20 versts. Very bizarre scenery. Rocks piled up on top of one another in strange fashion. Thirty-fifth and last stage: Sherat-Uliassutai, 20 versts. Road led over steep mountains; descent perilous in the extreme. Long plain heading north-west covered with snow. Gradually ascended another mountain. Descent again so perilous that we got out and walked. Side of hill very slippery owing to snow, and almost perpendicular. How the Mongols got

the carriage down was marvellous. Pitch dark night, and no moon, to help. Cold wind and mist. Descended a valley with low hills on either side. Crossed rivers Zagasti and Bogdoingol, and reached the Consulate at midnight, having been on trek for sixteen hours. A Cossack guard met us, and we were made welcome by the Russian Consul, M. Walther, and his charming wife, both of whom speak English and Chinese with great fluency.

Uliassutai is a small town situated at the confluence of the two rivers, the Zagasti and Bogdoingol, surrounded on all sides by steep and precipitous hills. It was formerly the seat of the Chinese military Governor, but this official left hurriedly when the independence of Mongolia was declared in December 1911. He had only a small escort of fifty troops, and could not have withstood an attack threatened by the Mongols. He appealed to the Russian Consul for help, which was readily given; and he, with his soldiers and retinue, was escorted to the Russian frontier station of Kosh Agatch by Russian soldiers. Since then the Chinese, who in former days numbered in Uliassutai about 2000, have gradually left the town, and now there are only approximately 200, who are steadily becoming less. The Mongols have appointed a young prince to administer the town and district,

but he is quite incapable. Useless also are the so-called Mongol soldiers and police who have been sent to join the main Mongol forces near Kobdo. Really the administration is in the hands of M. Walther, the Russian Consul, who has proved a good friend to the Chinese merchants, who, but for his intervention, would have fared very badly at the hands of the Mongols. To quote a case in point, a Mongol Custom-house was instituted at Uliassutai with the sole object of taxing Chinese merchants in the most oppressive manner. This was very rightly stopped by M. Walther.

He is always ready to furnish Russian escorts to protect the Chinese when they leave Uliassutai. Quite recently the Mongols tried to bribe the Russian troops who were escorting a well-to-do Chinese merchant to the frontier. Their idea was to murder the merchant and share the spoil with the escort, who were to report that they had safely escorted him to the frontier. Needless to say the Russian non-commissioned officer in charge of the escort rejected the infamous suggestion.

The Russian Consular district of Uliassutai embraces the two aimaks of Sain Noin and Jassaktu Khan, which are the two western of the four aimaks, or leagues as they are vaguely termed, of Halhar. The people of these aimaks are singularly apathetic

and indifferent to the Declaration of Independence, and have not yet declared themselves on the side of the Hu-tuk-tu of Urga. There are about 500 Russians, chiefly merchants, in Uliassutai and the district. There is little trade in the town itself beyond the sale of furs and skins. The nearest Russian Custom-house is Kosh Agatch, a place on the north-western frontier. Skins, furs, and other products of Mongolia are exempt from taxation on entering Russia. The town presents a deserted appearance, shop after shop closed and sealed by the Chinese.

The fort is about a mile due east of the town. It was built by the Chinese as a residence for the Governor and his troops. It is protected on all sides by a palisade, and is now occupied by Russian troops. A good road connects the fort with the town, crossing a pontoon bridge erected over the Zagasti River by the Chinese. The Consular compound encloses the residence of the Consul and his secretary, temporary quarters for the doctor and the colonel commanding the troops, and the post office. There is a weekly mail service to and from Urga and Kosh Agatch, mails being carried by Mongol couriers. The foreign community of Uliassutai is entirely Russian, consisting of the Consular officials, military, merchants and their

wives. They are very cheerful and happy under the most dispiriting conditions.

During our stay at Uliassutai we were very hospitably entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Walther at the Consulate. I was also very much indebted to Dr. Constantinoff, who kindly allowed me to share his bedroom.

CHAPTER XIV

ULIASSUTAI TO KOBDO[1]

THE night prior to our departure from Uliassutai, Mrs. Walther, the Consul's wife, gave a dinner party, to which the leading residents were invited. For the benefit of the superstitious, I will mention that we were thirteen at dinner. Nothing unlucky happened, however, as a consequence, to M. Louba and myself on our further journey to Kobdo. An impromptu dance followed to the strains of the gramophone.

10th April.—The next day we departed, our party being augmented by the addition of Mr. Horanoff. This officer was formerly in the Tzar's bodyguard at St. Petersburg, and being of a bright and cheerful disposition, he was very welcome. He brought his gun with him, and kept us well supplied with ducks and geese.

M. Louba got the usual hearty Russian send-off, and was escorted for about two miles by a Cossack guard of honour. A halt was then made,

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

and we partook of refreshments in a tent. Brief speeches followed, and farewells were said to M. Walther, Colonel Tzerelnikoff (officer commanding troops), Prince Ouhtomsky (captain in the Cossacks), Dr. Constantinoff, and several of the merchants. We had spent four very pleasant and happy days at Uliassutai, and had had a much needed rest.

Our route lay along the north bank of the river Zagasti. We then turned north-west, passing a collection of temples, and ascended a stony road until we came to the first station, Altar. The next stage was difficult. We encountered deep snow, and crossed the mountain range that shuts in Uliassutai on the west. The track was littered with rocks and boulders, the night was very dark, and the descent extremely steep. We were thankful to reach Borhor at about 9 p.m. with the carriage safe and sound.

11*th April*.—We negotiated the third stage to Hudukulan. The road was good, leading over grassy hills; the Mongols and their ponies excellent. We now saw for the first time the river Zachingol, which runs in a westerly direction until it empties itself into Lake Borganor. We followed the northern bank of this river past the stations at Ihudziss, Bagaziss, and Zur, the road being very sandy. During the day we met two Russian merchants en route to Uliassutai. One

of them had recently been with the Mongol army at Galodsingol. They both stated that there was no movement on the part of the Chinese troops at Sagantunke. Before leaving Urga, I had heard that it was the intention of the Chinese army to attack the Mongols at Galodsingol, capture Kobdo, then march on Uliassutai, capture that town, and from there to threaten Urga itself. The Russian Military Intelligence Department had received reliable information that the Chinese army was strongly encamped at Sagantunke, and had even learnt such minute details as these, viz., that in each tent were twelve men—nine soldiers, two woodcutters, and a cook.

At Uliassutai we heard, just before we left, that the Chinese were hastening reinforcements from Kuchengtze and other places in Sin Kiang to Sagantunke, and that as soon as they had 10,000 men they would carry out the programme as detailed above. It will therefore be readily understood that we were eager and anxious to learn the latest news from Kobdo itself. We heard a rumour, emanating from Mongol sources, that the Chinese had defeated the Mongols, and were actually in possession of Kobdo. Of this rumour the merchants had heard nothing.

12*th April*.—The third day of our journey

we crossed the Zachingol. The crossing was very difficult. First there were the sandbanks to pass, then the sandy beach, then the water itself. The current was very strong, and carried ponies and carriage down-stream rapidly until the carriage stuck fast in the sandy bottom. After much trouble, the team of ponies and men being reinforced by a camel, the carriage was shifted. Then came ice, which was slippery and treacherous. Eventually we reached the other side. Our troubles did not end here, for after a long drive in deep sand we came to a place where the sandbank was almost perpendicular, and the ice of the river came right up to it. To ascend the sandbank was impossible, and to drive on the ice, which was weak, was equally impossible; so we got out of the carriage, which was tilted along somehow, with men hanging on to either side to prevent it toppling over. The current of the Zachingol is so treacherous and variable that the crossing of the river is said to be the most dangerous and difficult in Mongolia. We completed two long stages, and ended up for the night at Argalantu. We saw flocks of wild duck round the river, which made very good eating. The soup, too, was excellent, and, as M. Louba said, one would not get such soup in London or Paris.

Since meeting the river Zachingol a biting north wind had arisen, which accompanied us for the rest of the journey to Kobdo. It affected us differently. It gave to my companions bad coughs, M. Louba already having a very sore throat, and to me, spasms of toothache and neuralgia. This wind was so keen and penetrating that it froze my sponge in the yurts, where we had fires, each night. These yurts were very draughty, and the draughts did not improve our various ailments. The yellow sand-banks, as seen against the rugged blue of the mountains capped with snow, were very striking.

13*th April*.—We reached Lake Borganor, a small stretch of water (now ice) fed by the Zachingol. We passed the southern shore of the lake, and then traversed the sandhills which separate Borganor from Lake Duganor. I had heard much of these terrible sandhills, and their terrors were not exaggerated. They are a collection of sand-dunes, the sand being deep, and piled up into steep ascents. There is no path or track, and the carriage had to be dragged along the sides of the hills. At the first hill the wheels stuck fast, and my companion had to get out and ride as I was doing. He went on with Horanoff. Mindful, however, of our experiences in the snowdrifts when en route from Urga to Uliassutai, I remained with the Mongols. When

in the snowdrifts M. Louba and I had descended and walked for about a mile in the wind and snow, and looking back had seen the carriage in the same place that we had left it in, I therefore walked back and found Mongols, Cossacks, and student interpreter all standing round the carriage talking and gesticulating, but doing nothing. I had to make them lift the wheels out of the snow, and give a hand myself to set them an example. On this occasion they repeatedly tried, with much beating, to make the ponies drag the carriage out of the sand, with the result that the poor beasts kept falling down, and were half buried, as the hill was vertical. I made them all dismount, and themselves lift the wheels and drag the carriage along. This was successful, and we were able to use the ponies again. Until the sandhills were passed, I took command, yelling at them in their own language, "Yao, yao, yao!" "Che, Che!" "Djar, djar!" and using appropriate expressions in English.

My experiences, such as they are, with the Mongols incline me to the belief that if properly led and managed they would make fine scouts. They are only too willing to follow a lead, and time after time, during our journey, I had but to shout an encouraging word, be it English or Mongol, and they responded with cheerful alacrity.

If Russia supplies really sound officers to make her army, and able administrators to regulate and reform her civil administration, Mongolia should have a future that will satisfy even the soul of Jenghis her great ancestor. If, on the other hand, Russia gives slack, indifferent officers,—civil or military,—the position of Mongolia will be worse than it was under the Chinese régime.

Having passed the sandhills, we emerged on Lake Duganor, a vast expanse of ice, stretching north as far as the eye could see, and bounded on the south and west by sloping hills, backed by the snowy mountains that converge into the Southern Altai system. We followed a good road round the southern shore of the lake, and passed the night at Duganor station on the western side.

14*th April*.—Next day we pushed on past Haragan and Girgalantu to Zahabuluk Usu. The road led in a N.W. direction up sloping hills covered with stones, small and large, which had probably been cast down from the mountains, whose ridges we were skirting. We rested for the night at Zahabuluk Usu ; below us stretched Lake Harasu, and beyond lay the hills, across which was Kobdo. I took a stroll towards the lake and surveyed the scene, which was impressive. In front, the icy surface of the lake and the snowy peaks of the

Altai mountains; behind, the sloping hill which we had just descended, and, a long range of mountains running parallel with our path and gradually becoming lower as they neared the lake.

15*th April*.—The sixth and last day of our journey, we crossed the pass on our left, steep and narrow, and came out on the south side of Lake Harasu. The chief of this stage was a bold man and a good leader; so, instead of making a détour to the south round the numerous icy ponds and streams which emanate from the lake, he took us straight across, heading N.W. The ice held well, and it was an exhilarating experience galloping across the lake at full speed, which I should have enjoyed had not the biting wind given me acute neuralgia. By going straight across in this manner we cut off 40 versts, and arrived at Harasu station —situated in a reedy swamp in the middle of the lake—in excellent time (four hours). We had been dreading this stage, as it is usually reckoned to be 80 versts.

M. Louba was greeted at Harasu by a deputation of Mongol officers from the camp at Galodsingol, who stated that the Chinese were still at Sagantunke, and that they showed no signs of leaving.

The next and last stage, from Harasu to Kobdo, was long and difficult. We started inauspiciously

by getting stuck in a portion of the lake which was covered with long reeds, 16 feet high, and thin ice. This ice gave way, and the wheels went deep into the slush. We walked for some distance, and the carriage was extricated with difficulty. At last, with great relief, we found that we were clear of the lake. We came upon several encampments in the reedy swamps, where the yurts were surrounded by camels, ponies, and cattle, and met flocks of geese and duck, which were so tame that they remained on the ground whilst the carriage passed within a few feet of them. One could have knocked them over with a stone or a stick. They reminded me of tame ducks and geese in a farm-yard. We next ascended hilly country, in parts stony, and finally descended a steep pass and saw Kobdo below us.

Kobdo is situated on a plain surrounded by mountains, south of the river Puyantugol. It possesses several tall trees, which give it a picturesque and refreshing appearance in contrast to the wild and rugged rocks and hills in the vicinity. A tent was erected in the plain south of the town, and here were assembled the entire population of Kobdo, Mr. Rozdolsky the Consul, Lieutenant Goltzoff (commanding the sixty soldiers who formed the garrison), a guard of honour furnished by these

M. Yehmolin

M. Louba,
Consul-General

Lieut. Goltzoff

THE RUSSIAN COLONY AT KOBDO, APRIL, 1913
(Photograph lent by H.E. Monsieur Korostovetz)

troops, ten Russian civilians (four merchants and their employés), and ten Chinese, the latter for the most part cooks and coolies. We were regaled with refreshments, and then drove into Kobdo.

During my stay in the town I was most hospitably entertained by Messrs. Louba and Rozdolsky at the Consulate, whilst Messrs. Yehmolin and Toropoff, two Russian merchants, kindly allowed me to sleep in a room in their compound. The merchants deal extensively in skins, and I saw quantities of skins being prepared at an impromptu tannery near the river, which are sorted in the compound.

The Russian Consulate was opened in May 1911 by M. Louba. On that occasion he recalled how he was greeted on the same plain by the Chinese Amban, Pu Jun, and a prosperous colony of Russian and Chinese merchants. The town was then full of life, and trade was excellent, the Chinese colony numbering about 300 persons. Now there are four Russian merchants as mentioned above, and every Chinese shop in the place is destroyed.

Let me try to describe what I saw when I inspected the town with Louba, Rozdolsky, Horanoff, and Goltzoff. A fine street, with tall trees planted on either side, lined with shops, all looted and

destroyed except the four Russian merchants' compounds.

Come into this garden, and what do you see? At first you will probably think, as I did, that it is planted with potatoes, vegetables, seeds, etc., with which, under happier circumstances, it would have been. No. Those mounds are the graves of forty Chinese who were shot or beheaded by the wall of the garden. Look into this temple—Buddhas and gods and all their tawdry accompaniments torn down and defaced; but that is not all. What of those coffins? You approach nearer, and you recoil, because the smell is not pleasant. Corpses half eaten by dogs are protruding; some are wholly eaten, and only their skulls and bones remain. You see the boots, the pipe, and the things that he valued during his life, and you feel a pang of sorrow that in his death the Chinaman should be robbed of what in his life he esteems of greatest importance, the hope and trust that his bones will rest intact in his native town or village in his native province. You turn away from the looted and desecrated temples, houses, and shops, and walk across the plain. There you see many bundles of rags, some with bones in them. These were once clothes which contained human bodies. The latter are now eaten by dogs. You see also trenches

drawn up, facing west and south. These were erected by the Chinese troops to resist the Mongols, —a pathetic sight because, when the Mongol army, under Prince Damdin Surun, came in August 1912 and worked the destruction which I have endeavoured to depict above, there was no Chinese army to defend the town. Pu Jun, the Amban, was injudiciously advised to resist the Mongols with a handful of men, with the result that 200 Chinese were killed, and the town and fort entirely looted and destroyed. The bulk of the Chinese were killed in the town, where such fighting as there was took place. The fort, which is about 200 yards north of the town, where the Amban and his soldiers resided, surrendered, and thereby greater loss of life was averted. The Amban and the Chinese survivors were escorted to Kosh Agatch by Russian troops, and thence transported to China.

Beyond a few yurts near the river, and a monastery on the north side, there are no Mongols resident in Kobdo. There are upwards of 1000 in the surrounding district, and the army at Galodsingol numbers about 4000 men. The prince who is in charge of the district called on M. Louba whilst I was at Kobdo.

It was difficult for me to get news about the situation, but I gathered indirectly that it was

unchanged and still serious. The rival armies are liable to join battle at any moment now that the spring is approaching and the snows are melting, and it will be possible for the Chinese army to cross the Altai mountains.

Before I close this chapter, I would like to make a few general remarks that do not directly bear on Kobdo.

Russia's first Consulate in Mongolia was opened at Urga more than fifty years ago. Uliassutai was opened in the last decade, Kobdo and Sharasume being later opened by M. Louba in the summer of 1911.

The Dalai Lama of Tibet took refuge in Mongolia in 1905, during the expedition of Younghusband to Lhasa. He resided near Urga, and M. Louba was the bearer of a telegram to him from the Tsar conveying his good wishes. After reading the telegram, or rather the translation, he was very anxious to know if the Tsar had written his name himself on the telegram ; and when told that this was not the case, he was very disappointed. M. Louba said that the Dalai Lama impressed him as being a young man of intelligence, who wanted to know the why and wherefore of everything. On this occasion the Russian Minister at Peking, M. Pokotilof, brought the congratulations of the

Tsar and presents, and had several audiences with the Dalai Lama.

By the latest agreement arranged between Tibet and Mongolia, the Hu-tuk-tu, who was the third in the Lama hierarchy, is now recognised to be the temporal equal of the Dalai Lama. Studying the features of the Mongols with whom one comes in contact, one notices many types which give one food for reflection. There is the low, vicious type of the Lama or priest, who wears no queue, and has his hair close cropped. This type, garbed in convict attire, would make first-rate imitations of Bill Sykes. There is the high cheek-bone and clear eye and handsome features of the Mongol, who recalls the greatness of his ancestors. Of this type I am sorry to say I saw but few specimens, but those that I did meet with made a strong impression. Then again there were many—not nice to look upon—suffering from syphilitic diseases, the noses in some cases being wholly or partly eaten away.

We spent some days at Kobdo, and I had intended to make an effort to reach several interesting places in the district,—Sharasume, where there is a Russian Consulate ; Sagantunke, the headquarters of the Chinese army ; and Galodsingol, the Mongol camp,—but found that it was impossible to do so because the snow was deep over the mountains, the

tracks were bad, and there were no facilities for travelling. There was also the strong probability that if I had attempted to visit either the Chinese or Mongol camps, I would have been summarily arrested as a spy!

CHAPTER XV

KOBDO TO KOSH AGATCH[1]

AT the present time, from the social point of view, Kobdo is a town of the dead, as I have endeavoured to show in the previous chapter. Politically, however, the district is very much alive, and Kobdo may truly be said to be the centre round which Russo-Mongol-Chinese relations now revolve.

Two causes in particular contribute to this state of affairs. In the first place, there is the proximity of the rival Chinese and Mongol armies, and the probability that the Chinese army will take the initiative and attack the Mongols. In accordance with the terms of her agreement with Mongolia, Russia has promised to assist Mongolia if the latter is attacked by a third party. There are, it is true, only a handful of Cossacks now at Kobdo, and 300 at Uliassutai ; but reinforcements have been urgently demanded, and a force of over 1000 men is said to be coming to Kobdo. Whether there are few or

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

many Russian troops is, however, immaterial to the main issue, since the crux of the business depends on whether the Chinese attack the Mongols or not. If they do so, China will, in the opinion of Russians with whom I have discussed the question, create a state of war between herself and Russia.

The second contributory cause to the unrest at Kobdo, is the presence in the district of the notorious Chal Lama. Nothing is known definitely as to this man's previous history. It is rumoured that he is a Kalmuck, in which case he is a Russian subject and liable to Russian law. His connection with Kobdo commenced about a year ago, when he first appeared in the district; by spending money freely and by dint of a powerful personality, he made himself so influential that he has lately been appointed abbot of the important monastery of Ulam Mungip — two days' march from Kobdo. Prince Sorik Tu-han, the temporary Governor of Kobdo, who is completely under his thumb, has given him this post. He has now styled himself the Hu-tuk-tan, in direct opposition to the Hu-tuk-tu at Urga, and is suspected of harbouring designs to make himself *de facto* ruler of the Kobdo district, which he contends is outside the four aimaks into which Northern Mongolia is divided, and is therefore in an independent position. He

possesses great influence with the army, in whose camp he is now residing. The only point on which he agrees with the Hu-tuk-tu's policy is his hatred of the Chinese rule. This man is a source of annoyance to the Russians, more especially as the people of the Kobdo district have not declared their allegiance to the Hu-tuk-tu. He is greatly feared in the district, which is entirely under his sway.

Such being the state of affairs, it was with a certain amount of regret that I left Kobdo on Saturday the 19th April.

Mr. Rozdolsky, with whom I had the pleasure of travelling, on the previous evening had been given a farewell dinner by the Russian merchants. To this feast, which was prepared by a Chinese cook in Chinese style, Messrs. Louba, Horanoff, Goltzoff, and myself were also invited. Many toasts were exchanged, and the proceedings were very convivial. I had some little difficulty in getting to bed that night, as my bedroom had been the venue of the feast. I need hardly add that it was impossible for many reasons to sleep there, so I slept on the floor in an adjoining room. We were rather crowded, the atmosphere was very thick, and I received much attention from the compound cat, who evidently regarded my presence on the floor as an intrusion. She first tried to sleep at the foot of my sleeping-

bag. I passively submitted to that, although I think she carried passengers on her who added to the number of hopping gentlemen who were preventing me from getting to sleep. Her next move was an endeavour to get into my sleeping-bag. This was more than I could allow, so I gently, but firmly, put her outside the door. She, however, nothing daunted, by scratching and clawing got the door open and descended once more on me. Again I removed her, and yet again she returned. In despair I pulled my bag close round me and left her to do what she pleased. She then apparently decided that I was not playing fair, and adjourned to a Russian's bed adjacent to mine.

The following day we departed. My travelling companion was given a great send off. All Kobdo and a guard of honour of Cossacks escorted him as far as the plain north of the town. The merchants in a body crossed the river Puyantugol with us, and last embraces were exchanged on the farther side.

At an earlier stage in the farewell proceedings I had very nearly shared in these embraces, and fear that I must have appeared very rude and ill-mannered when I politely declined the first embrace that was offered to me, murmuring in bad French,

rather feebly, as I held out my hand, that it was not an English custom to kiss, an insularism which I hope that the good people of Kobdo have forgiven.

I noticed a similarity between these hardy Russian pioneer merchants, mounted on their shaggy ponies and wearing their Sunday best clothes, and the old-fashioned Boer farmers of the Transvaal. This resemblance was increased by the appearance, from a distance, of Kobdo as seen amidst its tall trees, which reminded me of many a South African town, such as Christiana in the Western Transvaal, as I remembered it at the time of the South African War.

My companion before coming to Kobdo had been Consul at Urumtsi, the capital of the Chinese province of Sinkiang (the new dominions). During his two years' service there he had seen four different Chinese Governors. The latest and present Governor having been successively Taotai (Prefect), Neotai (Judge), and Fantai (Financial Treasurer). Mr. Rozdolsky referred to the good work done for the Chinese postal service at Urumtsi by Mr. Petersen, and the high esteem in which that gentleman had been held by all, especially the Chinese merchants.

Mr. Petersen had been sent to Urumtsi some three years ago to be the pioneer of the Chinese postal service in that far distant region, and had been

instrumental in extending the Chinese postal system to many towns in the province, including remote Kashgar.

From a tactical point of view, Urumtsi's position *vis-à-vis* Kobdo is important. They are connected by a road that is good compared with those to be found in Mongolia. This road extends about 800 versts, touching Sagantunke (where the Chinese army is now located), 250 versts approximately from Kobdo, then another 350 versts to Kuchengtze, an important garrison town, whence it is reported reinforcements are now being sent to Sagantunke. From Kuchengtze, Urumtsi is about 200 versts distant.

In normal times there is considerable trade between Kobdo and Urumtsi, and the journey is made in about a fortnight. At present, fear of being molested by the Chinese troops has put a stop to trade, as far as the Kobdo Russian merchants are concerned.

At the risk of being tedious, I propose to describe our journey to Kosh Agatch more or less in detail, as I think it embraces a portion of Mongolia little frequented by English-speaking travellers.

Having parted with the good merchants of Kobdo on the northern bank of the river Puyantugol, we made a gradual ascent to the pass over the northern

portion of the mountains which encircle Kobdo. We then descended into a large grassy plain, in which we saw many herds of antelopes. At the northern end of this plain was the island of Mingit, situated in the middle of the river Kobdo. Here we spent the night in the yurt of a Russian merchant, Mr. Popoff. The crossing of the Kobdo was difficult, as the ice was treacherous and the water deep. This river empties itself into Lake Harasu, which is the eastern boundary of the plain in which we were.

20*th April*.—Next day, 20th April, we again crossed the Kobdo on leaving our island, passed a monastery on the right, and proceeded north-west over bumpy and rocky ground; we halted at mid-day for lunch, when the sun was so warm that we sat out of doors with our coats off. Here we met the post from Kosh Agatch en route to Kobdo, carried by two Cossacks. There is no post or telegraph office at Kobdo, consequently telegrams and letters are carried by Cossacks to and from Kosh Agatch. The post arrives from Russia on Mondays, and leaves for Russia on Tuesdays. My companion was greeted here by a local prince of Turbet (the name of the locality), who presented him with the conventional farewell silk scarf. During the afternoon we crossed a pass over the hills at the western

end of the plain, and then came to another rocky, barren stretch of land, on the same level as the pass, where the air was perceptibly colder. The Kobdo, thickly wooded with small trees, was on our left and snowy mountains on our right. We stopped for the night at the yurt of another Russian merchant, Mr. Federof, under the mountains to the north at a place called Ulam Mungip. His yurt was pitched in a most picturesque position, amongst huge piles of boulders.

21*st April*.—The following day Mr. Federof locked up his yurt and his tea magazine and accompanied us for about six versts. Here he branched off to the left in order to pay a visit to a brother merchant living in the same rocky locality. We skirted the monastery of Ulam Mungip, of which Chal Lama, to whom I have alluded elsewhere, is the abbot. He was not there, but was with the Mongol army. His deputy had made great preparations to receive us the previous evening, expecting that we would pass the night there. My companion, however, preferred the yurt of Mr. Federof. He told me that when he came to Kobdo in the winter he had spent two nights at the monastery, and had been most kindly entertained by one of the monks, who was subsequently beheaded for an imaginary offence by order of Chal

Lama ; hence his recollections of the monastery were not agreeable, and I think he was very glad when a turn in the road hid it from our sight. It is a rich and well-equipped monastery, possessing a fine temple and accommodation for 200 monks.

The weather now became very cold, and the character of the country wild and barren in the extreme. We mounted a rocky track which continued for some versts on the same level as the rugged snowy mountains on either side of us. We then descended to another large plain, and passed the night by the side of the river Kobdo, in the yurt of Mr. and Mrs. Petrof, the latter a young bride who had been married but two months. I treasure a grateful remembrance of the strawberry jam and wild duck soup, both made by our hostess, with which we were regaled for supper. Our host's father and four brothers were all trading in the same locality, and judging from the vast herds of cattle with which the yurt was surrounded, Mr. Petrof, besides being a merchant, is successful also as a farmer.

22*nd April*.—We were so comfortable in the hospitable yurt of the Petrofs that we did not leave until late in the morning. The route was very picturesque, up sandhills, past rocky hills of granite, down a valley strewn with stones.

Here we said good-bye to the Kobdo, which had hitherto accompanied us always on the left. The Kobdo pursued its way to the S.W., and after crossing a stream which connects it with Lake Achitnor we turned due north, skirting the southern and western shores of the ice-bound lake through rocky and desolate country. We were keeping a keen look out for my companion's yurt, which had been sent in advance with two Cossacks, who had orders to pitch it by the side of the lake. We found it at 9 p.m., 15 versts north of the lake, under high snowy mountains. The cold was intense, and a bitter wind blew from the lake. There was no other habitation near, so the whole party—our two selves, two Russian servants, six Cossacks, and two drivers—passed the night in and round the tent.

We were making the journey in Mr. Rozdolsky's tarantass, driven by a Tartar coachman, another carriage carrying portions of our luggage being driven by a Russian. It was a tight fit, but the cold wind was so intense that we huddled together to keep warm. I was between Mr. Rozdolsky and the box containing our provisions, my head against a draughty part of the yurt, which I padded with my greatcoat, and my feet to the fire. I was much interested in watching the Cossacks. They were

well behaved, and made their arrangements for sleeping in a clean and orderly manner.

I ought to have mentioned that we had passed the camels, who were carrying most of our luggage, including my bed, earlier in the evening. After waiting for them for some time in vain, my companion had very kindly lent me a thick fur coat, and we were all composing ourselves for sleep as best we could when a noise and commotion proclaimed the belated arrival of the camels at eleven o'clock. They were very welcome, especially to me. The Cossack in charge and Mongol driver, who were perishing with cold, were given tea and refreshments, and we all turned in again. The next event of the night, as far as I was concerned, was that I woke up suddenly and noticed two volumes of smoke ascending to the ceiling—one from the fire, the other from my companion. I jumped up, and found that a spark from the fire had settled on the fur coat with which he was enveloped and was about to burst into flame. I extinguished it, others assisted, and the incident ended with no worse result than a burn in his coat for him, and a slight burn on the hand for me. We took no risks in future, and always had a Cossack on duty to keep awake and stoke the fire all night.

I slept none too well, one of the mass of humanity opposite being a heavy snorer, and so woke early and watched people gradually get up. The washing arrangements in some cases were simple but easy. A cup of water taken outside, the contents gargled in the mouth and then rubbed over the face. That sufficed for teeth cleansing and washing. The bag containing my washing things had been left outside in the carriage overnight, and when opened the contents—tooth-brush, sponge, towels, soap, hair-brush, etc. etc.—were found frozen hard together in a congealed mass. The tent showed its sympathy by helping me to thaw the mass, and I was enabled to wash, my operations, which had, perforce, to be conducted in the full view of all, being watched with as much interest, and I think surprise, as had been evinced by the Mongols. We breakfasted in relays, and tackled a fat goose that had been shot by one of the Cossacks the previous afternoon on Lake Achitnor.

Whilst the horses were being fed, preparatory to our departure, I watched the dismantling of the yurt. The various component parts were placed on camels, in charge of two Cossacks, and sent in advance to the next station in case we needed it. The dismantling operations took about fifteen minutes, and, looking at the ground that had been

occupied, I wondered how we had all packed in—men, rifles, swords, luggage, provisions, beds, etc.

23*rd April*.—The next stage from Lake Achitnor to the Chagan Lakes lay over a succession of rugged, bleak rocky passes, mounting higher and higher until we came to a series of grassy uplands covered with thick snow. The wind was biting and the cold intense; my companion remarked that when he came from Kosh Agatch last December, the weather was not so bitter as now. We eventually descended a narrow, winding rocky pass between two steep hills, and saw beneath us Chagan Nor, the name given to three small lakes situated under a conical-shaped mountain. We drove across one of these lakes, and stopped the night in my companion's yurt. The wind was so bitter and penetrating that I could not sleep. My washing-bag was under my head as a pillow, next to the fire, and the contents were frozen hard in the morning.

24*th April*.—The road lay up a narrow rocky valley and then ascended large snow hills, passed a small lake on the left, and after reaching the top of the hills, crossed the Russian frontier. We descended a steep pass, and beneath us was the plain in which the Chuya River has its origin, completely encircled by snow hills and mountains, which form the connecting link between the northern

Altai system of Siberia and the southern Altai mountains of Mongolia. These hills are the beginning of the Chuyan Alps, which extend in front of us beyond Kosh Agatch. We stopped for luncheon at the Customs Barrier station, 15 versts over the frontier and 45 versts from Kosh Agatch. This station is at the eastern end of the Chuyan plain or desert, and all luggage, goods, etc., are examined here.

Mr. Rozdolsky was greeted by a deputation representing the Kirghiz and Telengites of the district. We spent the night 15 versts farther on in a Kirghiz encampment, the Kirghiz yurts being slightly larger and more comfortable than those found in Mongolia.

The Kirghiz and Tartars are the aboriginal inhabitants of this part of Siberia. Their languages are somewhat similar, and their religion is the same —Mohammedan. There the resemblance ceases, as the Tartars have become very much like Russians, and make successful merchants, whereas the Kirghiz have preserved their nomad habits, live in yurts, and have most of their possessions in cattle. The Kirghiz men wear trousers, small skull-caps, and cloaks. Their ladies are much like English Sisters of Mercy, and wear white nun caps (with embroidery worked into the part that falls past the

KIRGHIZ ENCAMPMENT
In the oreground is a Kirghiz sportsman, with his hunting eagle

ears and under the chin), dresses, and high-heeled boots.

The Telengites are a mixture of Mongol and Kirghiz, and mostly belong to the orthodox Church of Russia.

25*th April*.—We completed the 30 versts that separated us from Kosh Agatch in good time,—two and a half hours,—one of our old horses had been changed and a fourth horse added, with a Mongol outrider. The route was not good, stretching over stones and numerous patches of ice and water thrown out by the Chuya, along whose bed we were driving.

We drove to the Custom-house, where we were treated with much kindness and consideration, our luggage being quickly passed. I was asked if I had any goods made in Japan, to which I truthfully replied in the negative.

We then went to the post office, and from there to our lodgings at the posting station.

Kosh Agatch.—The frontier town of central Siberia in the government of Tomsk, possesses importance inasmuch as it is the point of contact with N.W. Mongolia. It has a Customs station, post and telegraph office, and a depot for Government horses, under the superintendence of a skilled veterinary surgeon.

It is situated on the river Chuya at the N.W. end of the Chuyan plain, under the snow hills. The town is but a collection of log houses, comprising, in addition to the Customs and post offices, a few merchants' stores and houses, the posting-station, the church, the residences of the priest, doctor, police officer, and veterinary surgeon.

Kosh Agatch is Kirghiz, and signifies Good-bye Trees (Kosh = good-bye, Agatch = trees), as symbolic of the change of scenery, the Altai mountains beyond being thickly forested, whereas in the Chuya desert and Mongolia trees are rarely seen.

The day of our arrival being Russian Good Friday, we decided to postpone our departure for Biisk until Easter Monday.

CHAPTER XVI

THROUGH THE CHUYAN ALPS TO BIISK[1]

THE evening of Russian Easter Sunday at Kosh Agatch was spent by us at the houses of the postmaster and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Kolpekoff, and the priest and his wife. The priest, Père Vladimir, is by birth a Telengite, and has spent eighteen years at Kosh Agatch, where he is much liked and respected. He is also a missionary, and has made many converts amongst the Telengites, who supply the choir and church attendants.

Being Easter time, Kosh Agatch was *en fête*, and the church bells were gaily ringing. All were in their best clothes, and those who were entitled to wear uniform wore it. My companion put on his sword and decorations. The postmaster called, resplendent in fine epaulets and silver-tasselled sword. The Customs' representative who came to see us was likewise engirt with sword, and decorated.

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

The Chief of Police came also—*ipso facto* he was chief of himself, being the one and only representative of law and order at Kosh Agatch. He accompanied us for two days en route to Biisk, so for that period the unruly and turbulent spirits of the place must have had a good time.

We went to the church on Saturday evening, but did not attend the midnight service. The priest, as is the custom, came to visit us on Easter morning, accompanied by a Telengite chorister to sing the responses. He blessed the household, and offered up prayers before the Eikon. The latter was placed in the S.E. corner of the room, which we were occupying as our bed-sitting room, and the sofa on which I slept and all my belongings had to be removed before the little service could take place. As a matter of fact, the priest had come early in the morning when we were both asleep, and for that reason had to come again later.

On my companion's previous visit to Kosh Agatch a special choral service had been held to pray for his safe journey to Kobdo. As he had now returned from Kobdo safe and sound, I think the priest felt that he had a personal and spiritual interest in him, and welcomed him accordingly.

The journey from Kosh Agatch to Biisk is approximately 500 versts in length, the route as far

as Engudai passing through scenery which is said by competent judges to be as fine as any seen in the Alpine region. Were I to describe it by using such adjectives as grand, gorgeous, majestic, picturesque, beautiful, superb, I should but imperfectly convey what I would like to express. Perhaps my recent experiences in the bitter, barren, wind-swept regions of Mongolia have made me too extravagant in my language, and too appreciative of such a complete change of scenery. Be that as it may, I would that a more poetic and imaginative pen than mine could describe the many interesting phases of the route.

To mention a few. The river Chuya flowed always on our left until it joined forces with the river Katoon, at first covered with ice and snow, then as the weather becomes warmer clearing a passage through the ice and flowing in rapid current with a swirling, roaring sound ; frequently hidden from view by the thick foliage which overhangs its banks, winding amongst the mountains, at times with a rich green colouring reminiscent of the sea. The Chuyan mountains, frequently styled the Chuyan Alps, mere snow hills in the neighbourhood of Kosh Agatch, gradually increased in size and grandeur until they culminated into range after range of beautiful snow-crowned peaks, the lower extremities in places screened by dense forest

foliage, in other places standing forth, grey and dark, in bold bluffs of rugged, precipitous rock. The road itself followed the telegraph posts, ever-present and pleasant reminders that we were now in touch with civilisation, and passed such varied obstacles as icebound rivers and streams, snow drifts, melting snow and ice, quagmires, morasses, slush and mud, rivers in full flood, mountain torrents, rocks and boulders, bridges good and bad, ferries worked by men, horses, and steam. It ascended, descended, and wound round mountains and hills in places almost vertical.

Particularly dangerous places are denoted by stakes fastened to the ground, which form a railing to guide the horses, and also prevent the carriage from toppling over the precipices. At one such place, in addition to a precipice there was a deep snowdrift, and the tops of the stakes could only just be seen over the snow. The driver had been walking to encourage the horses, when the road abruptly narrowed. He, quite undisturbed, leapt on to the stakes and drove over the drift, jumping from post to post. The least slip on his part might have been disastrous to him and us, as the snow was quite 12 feet deep on the other side of the stakes. One sometimes sees these stakes cut short, or removed altogether. This merely shows that a way-

TYPICAL VIEW OF THE TRACK SKIRTING THE RIVER CHUYA

farer in need of firewood has removed them for that purpose.

At another place we came upon our heavy luggage lying in a drift, whilst the cart that had carried it was lying on its side with one of the front wheels smashed. The narrowest escape that we ourselves had was in the vicinity of Engudai. We had just congratulated each other on having successfully surmounted the Chikatamen Pass, and were winding along a road by the side of the river Ursul. We mounted higher, and before we or the driver realised it the road suddenly became narrow and the river bank on our right developed into a steep precipice. In front of us on the left was a rock abutting on the path, and on the right the path had crumbled badly. There were no protecting posts. We called to the driver to stop in order to get out of the carriage, but he had whipped up his horses and took us at a gallop over the break in the road. The right wheels literally went over space. I was sitting on the right side of the carriage, carefully watching the wheels, and we barely missed dashing into the rock on the left. It was not a pleasant experience, and if we had gone over the precipice we should have been dashed to atoms.

Let me say a few words as to the Russian post-stage system between Kosh Agatch and Biisk, which,

considering the difficulties and perils of the route to be traversed, is conducted in a most able and praiseworthy manner. The post stages, as the name implies, are primarily intended for the carriage of mails as quickly as possible. They are taken in carriages and leave Kosh Agatch for Biisk once a week, and are received once a week from Biisk. Specially strong horses are employed exclusively for this service; officials and persons having permission to do so are allowed to travel in this manner on payment of three kopecks per horse per verst; ordinary passengers who have not special permission pay, I think, eight kopecks. The stretch of 525 versts between Kosh Agatch and Biisk is divided into twenty-one stages, averaging from 20 to 25 versts each, some more and some less. At each stage there is what is called the station, where lodging for the night can be obtained, and simple fare, such as eggs, milk, bread and tea, can be bought. Here the horses and carriages are changed. Some of the stations are small, dirty, and uncomfortable; others, more particularly those between Engudai and Biisk, are clean and well furnished, reminding one of the old-fashioned inns that still can be seen in parts of England where the coaching system was used before the introduction of railways. Beds are rarely provided, and one usually sleeps on the floor; the actual

lodging and the samovar of hot water are to be had free of charge. For everything else one pays. The system is subsidised by the Government, and under the direct supervision of the police.

I was exceptionally lucky in having the good fortune to travel with Mr. Rozdolsky, seeing that the Governor of Tomsk had given special orders to the police all along the route, that horses and carriages were to be prepared for him, and that the various chiefs of police themselves were to accompany him from stage to stage to see that everything was in order; consequently we travelled *en princes*, and received the greatest attention; and more important still, the best of horses and carriages at all stages en route. Our little party consisted of four carriages. My companion and I in the first, then the Chief of Police, and two carriages for the two servants and heavy baggage. We used seven to nine horses, according to the difficulty of the stage to be traversed; our tarantass always had three horses. We paid nothing for the carriage and horses of the police officer, as he was travelling on duty. The horses are strong and reliable, and kept in splendid condition. This is essential when one thinks of such a stage as that between Aigoluk and Yadri, where there is a sheer drop of several hundred feet down to the river, with the track so narrow

that there is only just room for the carriage, and where a shying or restive horse would spell disaster and perhaps death to everybody.

At the western end of this stage the road is cut through a huge rock, and a wooden arch connects the two sides, so forming a doorway. Near by is inscribed, on the surface of a rock, a poem recording how the merchants had long waited for this road to be cut into the sides of the mountains, pointing out the dangers that are in store for travellers in front, and that it behoves them to be extremely careful and wary. Underneath the poem are written the names of the composers. The habit of writing one's name in prominent or difficult places is not confined to English tourists; all along the Chuyan track I noted Russian names scrawled over the rocks.

The bumping, jolting, and tilting of the carriage made my companion and myself experts in the art of balancing. The driver and our two selves spent most of our time in dangerous places, where there were snowdrifts, big boulders, or big fissures in the ground, in bounding from side to side to keep the balance of the carriage; often my companion saved me from taking a header into a snowdrift by adroitly perching himself on his side of the carriage, and I did the same service for him. We performed

A STEEP AND DANGEROUS PLACE ON THE CHUYAN TRACK. THE ROAD IS HIGH UP ON THE ROCK, AND IS SHOWN PROPPED UP BY WOODEN SUPPORTS

similar acrobatic feats during our sledge ride from Kurai to Barotalar.

The drivers of the carriages, sometimes mere boys, sometimes bronzed and bearded men, their nationality now Russian, now Telengite, but at all times, whether boys, men, Russians, or Telengites, possessed of skill and iron nerve, for which I have the greatest and highest respect. In dangerous places they kept up a continuous conversation with their horses, exhorting and encouraging them, and telling them that the station would soon be near, and that the Consul was a very important man, and that they must put forth their best efforts to get him safely to his destination. They very rarely used the whip. I recall how once when we were in the snowdrifts one of the horses shied at a dead sheep, broke its traces, got entangled in the harness, and did its best to make the other two horses join in a wild stampede for the steep bank of the river which was close by. Did the driver immediately commence to slash it with his whip? Not a bit of it. He brought the carriage to a standstill, handed me the reins (I inwardly praying that there would not be another bolt!), descended and approached the fractious animal, spoke to it gently and quietly and called it by endearing names, and so was able to calm it, straighten and tie up the harness, and we were off

again in five minutes. Had such an incident happened in Mongolia, there would have been shouting, beating, gesticulating, and a delay of at least half an hour.

There are times, however, when the horses really do run away, and then the situation is not agreeable. This happened to us when nearing Biisk, between the stages of Altaisk and Belokurihar. There was heavy rain at the time, and the road was filthy. The horses in the carriage of the Chief of Police, who had joined us at Altaisk, were very fresh, and bolted down a steep decline which led to a narrow bridge over a stream. We were in front, and descending the hill slowly when we heard excited shouts behind us, and looking round saw the other carriage coming down the hill straight on to us at a furious pace. There was no room for it to pass us, as the road was narrow, so our driver realising that our only hope of avoiding a smash up was to make our horses bolt too, whipped them up and we tore down the hill and over the bridge at lightning speed, closely followed by the police officer's runaway carriage. At the other side of the bridge the road opened out fortunately, and there was a bit of a hill, so both carriages were able to rein up.

Talking of runaway horses; when I was at Uliassutai, M. Walther, the Russian Consul, told me

that when he was travelling with his wife from Biisk along this same road their horses had done a bolt as they were descending a road leading along the side of the mountain. Their carriage was upset, and he was pitched out within a few feet of the precipice overhanging the river. Luckily neither of them was hurt, and the driver was able to calm the horses.

While on the subject of upsettals, let me tell of the sad plight of the District Judge of Altaisk. He had left Altaisk en route for Smolenskaia on the same day that we left the town, but at a later hour. He safely performed the stage to Belokurihar, which place he left at 7 p.m. The night being dark, and the road filthy and swampy, he arrived at Smolenskaia at 3 a.m. next morning, having taken eight hours to do a stage that had taken us three hours of daylight. I was woken up by his arrival, and the next morning at breakfast he recounted the story of his night's adventures. In the first place, when passing a narrow road, with a river on the left-hand side, which I recollect had been extremely difficult when we passed it by daylight, the carriage had toppled over the side, and he, the coachman, horses, carriage and all his belongings received a ducking. The water was not very deep, and they all scrambled out safely. Then he went on again, lost the way hopelessly,

and three times came back to the same spot, having driven in a circle. I fortunately had some brandy in my flask, which we gave him, and when we left Smolenskaia he seemed quite well, and, except for a headache, none the worse for his misfortunes. He was comparatively new to the district, or I do not think he would have travelled on such a road at night.

Mr. Consten, whom we met later at Biisk, told us that he too had recently had two duckings, the first in the river Chuya near Kosh Agatch, and the second when crossing the Biya to Biisk. In the latter case the ice had given way near the shore, and he was very nearly drowned, most of his baggage, including silk and photographic plates, being damaged.

Mr. Cunningham, another acquaintance at Biisk, related how once when sledging over the Biya the ice had cracked, and two out of his three horses were drowned. He rescued the driver, as the sledge could float, and they were able to make their way back to the shore.

I have strayed somewhat from the subject of this chapter, namely, our journey from Kosh Agatch to Biisk. Such incidents as those I have related show, however, that travelling in these regions is difficult and in places perilous.

The small towns and villages through which we

passed had all a prosperous, happy appearance, and confirmed my companion's statement that the Altai region was the richest and most densely populated in Siberia. It was the week after Easter, consequently all shops were closed, and everybody was attired in their best clothes. When the weather was good the men and youths were loafing in groups by themselves, wearing either fur caps or black wide-awake hats, shirts—green, red, and yellow being the colours most in favour—worn long and held in place by either a belt or waistband; black velvet trousers, tucked into long black knee-boots. The women and girls were usually near at hand eyeing the males with shy looks. They wore coloured shawls over their heads and shoulders, and blouses and skirts. All manifested a great interest in our progress down the streets; the drivers, with a very human desire to show off before an audience, making the horses gallop madly, to our great discomfort, and when the road was muddy, to our personal disfigurement, both of us usually arriving at the end of the stage with our faces plastered with mud. The men were very respectful in their demeanour, and usually took off their hats to my companion. When the weather was bad, all heads were at the windows to see the Consul pass by, as our comings and goings were noised abroad well in advance.

I was interested to see how the children amused themselves, and noted that swinging had easily pride of place for both sexes. Boys and girls, big and small, crowded on to the swings, and enjoyed themselves hugely. A swing seemed to be an essential equipment for each house with any pretensions to respectability, and was usually to be seen attached to the entrance gate. Another game that had favour with the boys looked like rounders, being played with a bit of stick in lieu of a ball in the villages. At Biisk I saw a real indiarubber ball being used. The national game of Russia,—Gorodki, —a sort of skittles, was also in evidence.

Looking over the wooden palings which surrounded each homestead, we saw stacks of wood, piles of hay and straw, and various kinds of farm implements. The number of carts, carriages, horses, cows, pigs, goats, poultry, etc., gave one some indication as to the prosperity of the owner.

The grain and dairy industries form the staple support of the district, with honey-making and the sale of skins, wild game, etc., as side issues.

Under existing conditions the troops of Urga, Uliassutai and Kobdo are supplied by the Irkutsk Government, and are sent viâ Kiachta. They are for the most part Cossacks, divided into two categories—the Western Siberian Cossack, who wears

a red stripe down his trousers and red tabs on his shoulders, and the Eastern Siberian, or Trans-baikalian Cossack, who wears yellow stripes and tabs.

Buriats (Mongols who are Russian subjects) are allowed to enlist in the Eastern Siberian Cossacks. The Cossack, as a rule, is a cheery, good-hearted fellow, but very lacking in intelligence, and slow in taking initiative. I saw a good deal of both "Reds" and "Yellows" in my journeyings, and, on the whole, preferred the "Reds." The latter accompanied us from Kobdo to Kosh Agatch, and when we parted with them on the 28th April we passed from the protection of the military to that of the police, seeing that we were now in Russian territory.

In addition to Appendix G, in which stages, places, distances, times taken en route, and state of roads are detailed, I give hereunder a few notes regarding the route, which may be one of importance from a military point of view in the event of Russia being involved in a war of any magnitude in Sinkiang or Mongolia.

28*th April*.—First stage: Kosh Agatch-Kumtonar, 35 versts.

Left Kosh Agatch in a dust-storm. The crossing of the Chuya and its affluents was very difficult,

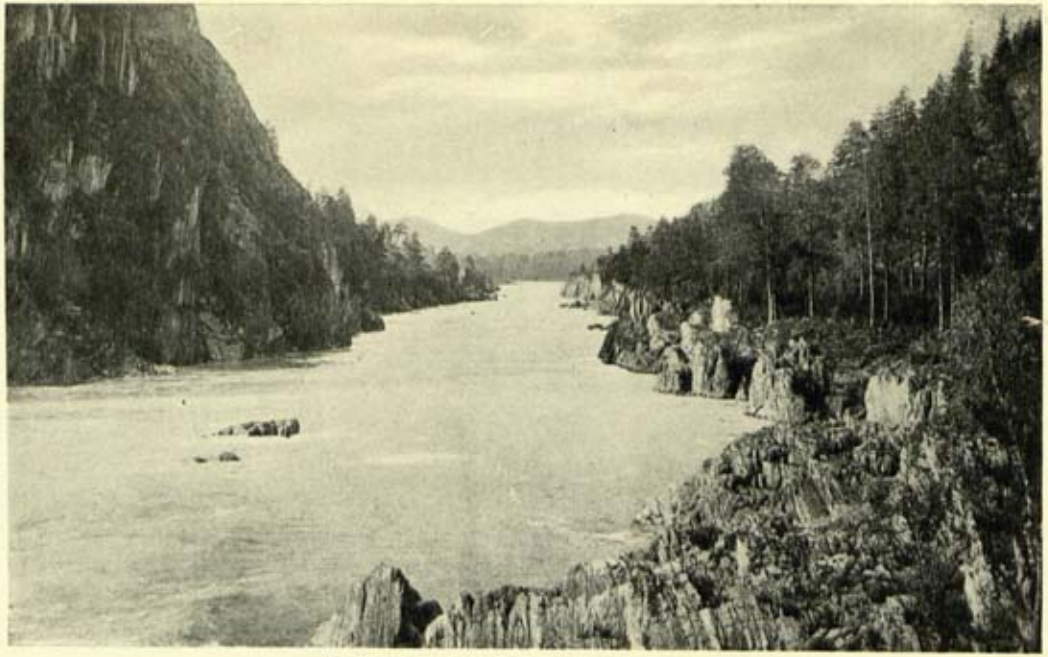
owing to the melting snow and ice. Followed the Chuyan plain for 20 versts, then the scene abruptly changed. Found ourselves in the Chuyan Alps, amongst dense foliage, lofty mountains, and beautiful scenery. Passed snowdrifts 12 feet deep. The path then became steep and rocky. Lunched at Kumtonar, prettily situated in a clearing amongst the woods.

Second stage: Kumtonar-Kurai, 27 versts.

Stony road; narrow valley opened out into a plain covered with deep snow, which made the going very difficult and tedious. Kurai consisted of a few log huts and a missionary church on the edge of the woods sloping down to the river. Spent the night here in a comfortable lodging, clean and tidy.

29*th April*.—Third stage: Kurai-Barotalar, 20 versts.

Snow so deep that we took sleighs instead of carriages. Route picturesque but dangerous and difficult; led over plain covered with deep snow studded with trees. Many snowdrifts. Ascended succession of hills and valleys; descended almost vertical mountain, road zigzagging down sides. Scenery beautiful, fresh spring air, blue sky, mountain side covered with fir trees. Far below, like a black speck in the snow, was the next station, Barotalar; on the opposite side of the river were low-



A WOODED REACH ON THE RIVER CHUVA

lying hills densely forested, backed by snow-tipped peaks of Altai, gloriously white.

Death, no respecter of seasons, had abruptly ended the Easter festivities of Barotalar, and the first thing that we saw there was a coffin. The wife of the station manager had died. The station was small, one room only, in which the corpse was, so we remained outside and I wrote these notes sitting in the sleigh. Luggage carts met great difficulties descending mountain, arrived one and a half hour after us. Horses at Kurai weak and feeble, owing to the country being under snow. In our sleigh used horses reserved for carriage of mails. These horses are specially cared for and well fed.

Fourth stage: Barotalar-Chibit, 17 versts.

Followed Chuya, then turned to right. Passed small stream originating in the mountains, where was a frozen waterfall. Good road over fresh grass, very pleasant and warm. Chibit, thriving village—church, shops, administration office. Station, where we lunched, clean and comfortable.

Fifth stage: Chibit-Aigoluk, 22 versts.

Good road over grassy plain until we met Chuya again. Followed on same level as the river, beautiful scenery, wild and romantic, river deep green, flowing with rapid current through channels that it had made through ice. Latter 3 feet thick

on either side of channel. Huge rocky mountains on either side of river, narrowing to within a mile of one another; road winding up and down steep sides of mountains. Aigoluk picturesquely situated at confluence of Chuya with small mountain stream, entirely surrounded by mountains. Consisted of one rather dirty house and two or three yurts. Spent night here. Were waited on by several pretty Telengite girls, daughters of the manager.

30*th April*.—Sixth stage: Aigoluk-Yadri, 25 versts.

Uncomfortable night. Room was full of cockroaches, bugs, etc. Walked along banks of Chuya; saw many evidences of spring, pretty singing of birds, butterflies, fresh green on trees, grass and moss. Most picturesque, and in parts most dangerous stage yet met. Route lay over grassy land strewn with boulders hurled from mountains on right; mounted higher and higher, along road cut sheer out of rocks; precipice on left, and far below, many hundreds of feet, the winding Chuya. Natural gate cut in rock, and poem enumerating dangers at western end of stage; numerous names inscribed on rocks. Yadri consisted of just the station house, within a stone's-throw of the river.

Seventh stage: Yadri-Ousenya, 35 versts.

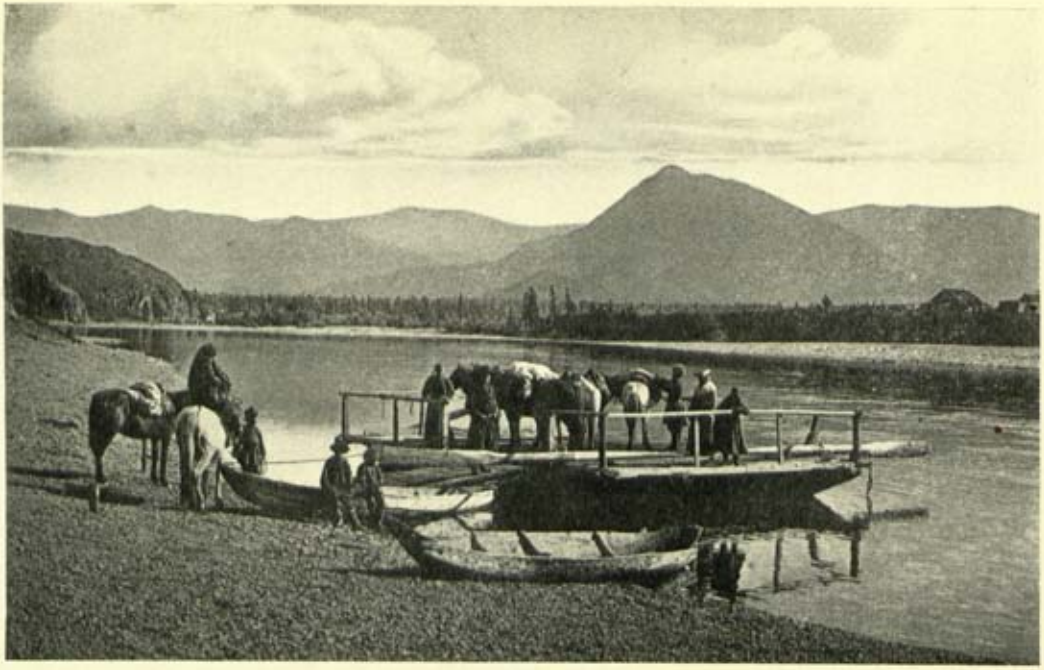
For the first 20 versts the road was quite good, winding over grassy slopes of mountains, then scenery and character of country changed. Mountains opened out to the south and north. The Chuya here merged itself into the Katoon, flowing north and south, and the region of the Chuyan Alps and river ceased. Road extremely difficult at junction point of the two rivers, winding up and down steep and rocky banks and hills; followed Katoon over a grassy plain, then turned sharp to the right, and, after crossing a mountain river, saw above us a partly built log church. Below this was the village of Ousenya, where there was much animation and life, all the inhabitants appearing to be out in the streets playing games, etc.

The village priest came to see us, and we returned his call and had supper with him, meeting his wife and children. Russian country clerics, like their colleagues in other countries, are singularly blessed with offspring. The priest (or rather deacon, as he was every day expecting to hear that he was to be admitted to priest's orders) told us that the district had lately suffered a bad epidemic of scarlatina, which had hit them hard, inasmuch as the nearest doctor was at Engudai, 67 versts away. We gave him all our surplus stores and the contents of my companion's medicine-chest. The

new church was being built out of logs felled in the neighbourhood. Took a stroll in the village, saw the little village school, and climbed the belfry of the church, from which there was a grand view.

1st May.—Eighth stage : Ousenya-Kurkuchi, 25 versts.

Whilst having breakfast, watched horses being shod in the yard. Four posts are placed in ground, horse is in middle attached by ropes to the posts. On each post there is a piece of wood sticking out. On these the horse's legs are strapped by ropes, and the operation takes place. Road led along the Katoon to the floating ferry. The latter is formed by two boats joined together—like a miniature Calais-Douvres, attached by a steel hawser to a rope connecting the two banks, and propelled across the river by means of a huge oar. Crossed river by this ferry. Across grassy plain to another ferry, again crossed in same manner. Road wound round a dangerous hill formed of sand and small stones ; just room for a path. Below, a shelving precipice descending to river. Noted huge rock on right, kept in place by three stakes, also several places where land had slipped away from under the path. Were both glad when we were safely over. Passed successively grassy plain, snowdrifts, and another winding rocky path, and then ferried across



FERRY ACROSS THE RIVER KATOON

the river for the third time. Caught up heavy luggage here, and we all crossed together—four carriages, nine horses, and eleven men. More could have been taken, so strongly constructed are these boats. Weather was bad; wind and rain, first rain that I had seen since leaving Shanghai in February; climbed steep bank, and found station; here we lunched.

Ninth stage: Kurkuchi-Engudai, 42 versts.

Good road beside a little mountain stream. Passed several small villages, bought a bucket of honey from an old man who told us he had been selling honey for thirty years. He looked at me long and critically, and then quite seriously asked my companion if I was a Chinaman! Skirted a wood by the mountain stream and came to the foot of the Chikatamen Pass; the road zigzagged in a most extraordinary manner, and so we decided to walk straight up the steepest part. View from top of pass very grand; behind and below us the valley that we had just passed screened by pretty green trees, round us on all sides lofty mountains with their tops wreathed in mist. In front a smiling valley bathed in sunlight, with cultivated country on either side of the river which ran through it. Mountains still in front and beyond, but not so high as those we had passed, the main Altai range

seeming to break away to the N.W. Road followed valley east and then turned north up another valley, skirting river Ursul, where we nearly had an upsettal owing to the path abruptly narrowing. Passed many Kalmuck tents, made of bark held together by poles, and arrived at Engudai at 6 p.m. Quite a large town ; has a daily paper, two churches, 200 houses, and about 50 educated people. The Chief of Police, Mr. Jacoubovsky, entertained us at his house, where we met the District Judge and his wife. The police district extends from Kosh Agatch on the south to Shebailenor in N.W., and to manage this large area, the size of Belgium, the Chief of Police has one clerk and four under officers to assist him. Engudai, which in Kalmuck means the seat of ten gods, is the meeting-place of three rivers, and so is damp and swampy. One of these rivers, the Ursul, is said to break up in the middle of December in spite of 30 degrees of frost, clear itself of ice, and then freeze up again in a fortnight ; a phenomenon which is quite unaccountable. The town is rich and prosperous, being the centre of trade for the surrounding country. It is famous for its bands, including a Kalmuck string band, which plays on instruments made from reeds.

My companion's servant, nicknamed "Ashtor Shroff," formerly a soldier at Omsk, who used to

SORCERER BEATING A GONG BEFORE A KALMUCK TENT

help me in many ways, noticed that I was always scribbling whenever we stopped anywhere, and asked what I was doing. When told that I was threatening to write a book, he asked that he should be mentioned in it. I agreed, and now keep my promise.

2nd May.—Tenth stage: Engudai-Tingar, 37 versts.

Excellent breakfast, revelling in such luxuries as fresh butter, milk, eggs, and honey. For the rest of the journey we got these in plenty, and my invariable queries on arrival at the various stages, "masla pajalousta" (butter, please), "yaitsa" (eggs), "malako" (milk), were a never-ending source of amusement to my companion and his servants. Three fine strong horses took us along at a spanking pace over good road up wooded and cultivated valleys, following bend of river; crossed two streams, where there were bad places caused by melting snow and slush; Kalmuck tents and settlements much in evidence. Met Kalmuck lady riding astride, wearing a black headdress, like the helmet of Britannia. Tingar a small station, neatly furnished, and very clean. Lunched here.

Eleventh stage: Tingar-Pestchaniyar, 23 versts.

Good road led up and down wooded valleys full of horses, cattle, and Kalmuck tents. Ascended

steep hill by mountain torrent, where woodland scenery was very pretty, but road bad. Slushed our way to Pestchaniyar, a collection of log huts in a muddy swamp.

Twelfth stage: Pestchaniyar-Topu Chaiyar, 15 versts.

Short, but difficult stage. Ascended steep wooded hill, where melting snow formed rivers in the road. View from summit fine, vast vista of hills and mountains covered with fir trees and snow. Passed dense snowdrifts from 3 to 4 feet deep, extending for about 2 miles. Here met emigrants, whose carts were all stuck in the drifts. They had to unharness their horses and put them all to each cart, and so drag the cart over the drifts. We had to walk. Snow came over top of my stick. After drifts, melting snow and slush; in places the road was so bad that it had to be supported by poles laid along the ground. Crossed two long wooden bridges, which heralded the approach of Topu Chaiyar, a large village turned into a swamp by the amount of melting snow flowing in streams from the surrounding hills. Spent the night here; comfortable station.

3rd May.—Thirteenth stage: Topu Chaiyar-Shebailenor, 20 versts.

Muddy but easy road by side of a mountain

torrent. Pouring rain. Shebailenor large village with post office, church, and many stores.

Fourteenth stage: Shebailenor-Miyutai, 15 versts.

Good road leading down narrow pass through the hills. Heavy rain. Miyutai large village.

Fifteenth stage: Miyutai-Chergan, 20 versts.

Road followed same valley; much mud owing to rain; horses very good. Chergan usual style of large village, divided into two parts by a river with very rapid current, which we crossed.

Sixteenth stage: Chergan-Kamad, 25 versts.

Road was like a swamp; led round and round the steep sides of the hills; fissures sometimes 2 feet deep, forming small cascades and waterfalls; also much broken ice and great slabs of hard snow. Eventually crossed the pass, which proved to be the last of the mountains before reaching Biisk; descended steep rocky valley, following a mountain torrent, which in many places had overflowed its banks, and joined forces with the road. Sometimes it was impossible to distinguish which was road and which was river. A difficult and dangerous stage. Drivers and horses were splendid. Have never seen such fine driving. Our driver, quite a boy, drove over the most perilous places like a veteran.

4th May.—Seventeenth stage: Kamad-Altaisk, 27 versts.

Dangerous and difficult stage, down steep mountain valley, where road and river were often merged into one wild torrent; in places road became narrow, and hung over deep parts of river in most perilous manner. Had three mounted scouts in advance to warn us of dangerous places. Valley ended at village, 7 versts from Altaisk. Here the country opened out, and we were quit of the Altai mountain system. Drove over grassy downs to Altaisk, a small town situated in a plain, where many mountain streams converge, surrounded by low-lying downs. Altaisk, as its name implies, marks the commencement of the Altai mountains when approaching from Biisk. The Chief of Police of the Altaisk district, Mr. Kamaroff, escorted us from here for the rest of the journey. When questioned as to the amount of crime in the district, he stated that horse stealing was the chief offence, and that there were about 200 criminal cases each year. There are no political prisoners in this district.

Eighteenth stage: Altaisk-Belokurihar, 25 versts.

Rained all the way, in fact all day. Road compared with that of the preceding stages was good, but met with some nasty snowdrifts, and had to cross several mountain streams and swamps. Chief of Police's horses bolted and almost collided with

us. Near escape. Just got over narrow bridge in time.

Nineteenth stage: Bélokurihar-Smolenskaia, 25 versts.

Road over downs was muddy; came to village perched amongst swamps; huge snowdrifts in vicinity; mud in streets of Smolenskaia was vile, almost over wheels of carriage. Twice on this stage front wheels came off our carriage; luckily we were not going very fast. Spent night here; quite a large town; comfortable lodging.

5*th May*.—Twentieth stage: Smolenskaia-Katoonsk, 12 versts.

At breakfast heard of the Altaisk District Judge's adventures in the night; his ducking in the river, and driving round in a circle. Commiserated with him and gave him brandy, but congratulated ourselves that we had not attempted such a stage on a dark night when there was no moon. Road to Katoonsk quite good, though partly swampy, due to rains and snow.

Twenty-first stage: Katoonsk-Biisk, 17 versts.

Katoonsk is small town situated near confluence of the Katoon and Biya. After the junction, the united rivers flow under the common name of Ob past Barnaul and Novo Nikolaievsk and Tomsk, being connected with the latter town by the river Tom.

Crossed Katoon by horse ferry. We were eighteen men, sixteen horses, and four carriages, and took twenty minutes getting over; four horses are in the forepart of the ferry, harnessed to a circular revolving disc, which is attached to two primitive wooden paddle-wheels; man standing in middle of the disc, like master of ring in circus, whips and encourages the horses. Current is very strong, and river very broad, and horses have to spin round and round as fast as they can move. Punting poles are also used to keep the ferry off sand-banks. My companion took two minutes driving across this river in winter when it was covered with ice.

On the other side of the river my companion was greeted by Mr. Consten, a German gentleman who had stayed with him at Kobdo, and had left that place for Biisk two weeks before our departure. His wish had been to push on quickly to the railway, but he had been detained at Biisk owing to the lateness of spring, it being equally impossible to travel by steamer on the river owing to the ice, or overland by tarantass or riding because of accumulations of snowdrifts and ice on the road.

We drove over a swampy stretch of land which separates the Katoon from the Biya; then came to a broad avenue of trees, the river Biya on our left

and woods on our right. On the other side of the Biya were dense woods with rich merchants' country houses glistening white amongst them, then Nobel's petroleum oil tanks, and then the town of Biisk, stretching along the river front with its ten churches, and shops and houses glittering in the sun, backed by a steep sandbank on top of which was a group of tall trees surrounding the cemetery. On our side of the Biya we passed a suburb backed by the forest until we reached the steam ferry. Mr. Consten pointed out the spot where he had nearly been drowned when he had crossed the river three weeks earlier, riding over the thin ice, which had given way within 50 yards of the shore. We drove through the muddiest and dirtiest of streets, passing some very fine shops, to the Hotel Makaroff, where we stopped during our sojourn in the town.

After our travelling experiences this hotel was a haven of luxury; to have a room to oneself and a clean bed, and not to be obliged to sleep on the floor in the immediate company of cockroaches and other hopping and crawling creatures; to have well-cooked meals, and polite waiters dancing attendance in conventional white shirts and black coats, was truly a welcome change.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE OB BY STEAMER TO NOVO NIKOLAIEVSK[1]

BIISK derives its name from the river Biya, on whose banks it is situated. It is practically built on a swamp, which fact largely accounts for the filthy condition of its streets. One walks above wooden boards on either side of the street, under which is the drainage. The houses are chiefly built of wood, and fires are of frequent occurrence. One occurred on the night of our arrival, and destroyed three houses.

The town contains about 30,000 inhabitants, and is a centre of emigration for Mongolia; almost without exception the merchants whom we had met in N.W. Mongolia informed us that their homes were in the Biisk district. Two prominent firms that have their representatives in Kobdo and other parts of Mongolia are the houses of Messrs. Asanoff and Kuznetzov. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kuznetzov and his wife, partaking of their hospi-

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

BIISK, ON THE RIVER BIYA, IN EASTERN SIBERIA
A small portion of the town is seen. The river Biya joins the river Katoon a few miles below Biisk, and together they form the mighty river Ob

tality on the occasion of the anniversary of the Tsarina's name day, Tuesday, 7th May. Another merchant, Mr. Bodonoff does a large trade at Uliassutai. He made a sporting attempt to reach that place by motor car from Biisk, and broke down within 100 versts of his destination and had to abandon his car. When at Urga I saw a machine which had been driven from Kiachta, and heard afterwards that a German merchant had actually motored from Urga to Uliassutai.

Biisk, to the Russian merchant in Mongolia, is a paradise to which he returns when he thinks that he has made enough money. I heard many stories of the manner in which these men squander their hard-earned money—expensive dinner parties, lavish quantities of champagne, *cafés chantants* and such places of amusement, absorbing most of it.

As a contrast to such expensive haunts, I must mention the "People's House." In the large towns of Russia and Siberia there is a place of entertainment called the "People's House." Here for a modest sum one can enter, read the latest papers, and refresh oneself with tea and other non-alcoholic drinks. Popular performances, concerts, etc., are given at low prices in the evening. It is an institution supported by the Government in order to afford a resting-place for the poorest of

the peasants, and give them simple fare and amusement at the lowest possible prices.

When at St. Petersburg I saw an operatic performance at one of the biggest theatres in the capital, where the best Russian actors and actresses were acting. This was given at a theatre presented by the Emperor to the people. The prices were very low, and the place was crammed.

When one hears so much said against the Russian Government, it is good to be able to instance the case of the "People's House," an example of paternal government in the best sense of the word.

Whilst at Biisk I climbed the sandbank behind the town and visited the church and cemetery, which, standing amongst high trees, form a prominent landmark on the horizon. Beneath me was the town — a collection of parti-coloured churches, public buildings, shops and houses, green, blue, and red being the predominating colours; beyond, the sluggish waters of the Biya; on the other side, the straggling suburb showing white amongst the green of the trees, and in the far distance the snowy ridges of the Altai. Behind the telegraph poles showed that due north was the direct road to Barnaul and Novo Nikolaievsk. East and west flowed the river.

In the winter, when the river is ice-bound, the

journey to Novo Nikolaievsk is made overland by tarantass, and takes about a week, sometimes less, the distance being about 500 versts. The distance by river is about 800 versts, owing to its many windings, and it takes about three days by steamer.

We were detained a few days at Biisk until the news arrived that the river was open between Barnaul and Novo Nikolaievsk. Mails also were received, twenty days having elapsed since the receipt of the last mail from the north. The mails from Biisk had also been seriously delayed owing to ice barriers and snowdrifts north of Barnaul. The last courier who had attempted to cross the barrier was nearly drowned and most of his mails badly damaged.

My companion's German friend, Mr. Consten, was staying at the Makaroff Hotel, and was kind enough to give me some interesting information regarding his adventures in Mongolia. He has been connected with Mongolia for the last five years, and has travelled very extensively in all parts of the country. He has found gold amongst mountains and rivers, has shot wild horses, wild sheep, wolves, antelopes, and foxes. Of the wild sheep, he has met with three species, the black, grey, and white, having seen about 200 of the black and grey, and only three of the rare white.

He is an expert photographer, and has taken some wonderful photos in most perilous spots. He is commonly styled the "German Consul" at Biisk, because of the resemblance of his name Consten to Consul. He holds the record for fast riding between Kobdo and Kosh Agatch, having completed the 350 versts that separate the two places in thirty-five hours (riding night and day, and changing horses four times only). We took six days doing the same distance in a tarantass. He made this wonderful ride in August 1911, and its correctness is certified by the Russian merchants at Kobdo and the postmaster at Kosh Agatch.

It was a great pleasure to me to meet an Englishman, Mr. Cunningham, stopping also at the Makaroff Hotel. We had been fellow-passengers in the Wagons Lits Express from Moscow to Kurgan in the spring of 1911. When he left the train at Kurgan neither of us thought that the next time we would meet would be at Biisk. I saw a lot of him during my three days' stay. He very kindly supplied me with much useful information about the town and district, of which I have gladly availed myself. The firm which he represents is Messrs. Lonsdale & Co., of London, who do an extensive business by exporting butter, eggs, frozen game, etc., from Siberia to England.

Mr. Cunningham, who pays yearly visits to Siberia to look after the interests of his firm, explained the methods which are employed in dealing with the peasants. The latter form a Co-operative Society, and once a week, or oftener, bring whatever butter, cheese, eggs, game, etc., they may have to Biisk, where the Society has its own offices and staff. The goods are then shipped on consignment to Messrs. Lonsdale & Co. in London, and whatever sum they actually realise in England, less expenses and commission, is credited to the Society at Biisk. The initial capital is supplied by Messrs. Lonsdale, and every assistance rendered by them when the years are lean ; and every encouragement given to the peasants, who have the satisfaction of feeling that they are partners in the concern, and will receive the best value for their goods.

Amongst other foreign firms trading in Biisk are Messrs. Fient (British), Jergensen (German), Knudsen (Danish), Korch (Danish), and the Siberian Company (Danish), who deal in dairy produce. The big firm of Dreyfus & Co. (French) have practically a monopoly as grain merchants. The International Harvester Company (American), who supply machinery to all parts of Siberia, and Messrs. Nobel (Swedish), who have big petroleum oil tanks. With the exception of Messrs. Lonsdale, the other

dairy merchants buy butter, etc., direct from the peasants, paying whatever is the current market rate.

The contemplated Altai Railway, to connect Biisk with Novo Nikolaievsk viâ Barnaul, will soon be a reality. There has been some difficulty in raising the necessary funds, the four Russian banks who were originally approached in this connection being unable to undertake the contract. Now I believe an agreement has been made with Mr. Trepoff, a Russian financier representing a Belgian syndicate, whereby the line is to be built as quickly as possible, the terms being that seventeen years after the first sod is cut the line and all properties connected with it is to become the property of the Russian Government. Meanwhile sleepers, etc., are being got together, and it is anticipated that the line will be completed two years from the commencement of operations.

The Steamship Companies, realising that their day will soon end, and that they must make as rich a harvest as they can in two years, have increased their fares all round by about 100 per cent.

As a sequel to Russia's agreement with Mongolia, a concession has been granted to the Russians to extend the telegraph line from Kosh Agatch to Uliassutai and Kobdo.

The Government's recent action in passing a measure to restrict the Kalmucks in the Altai district to one locality, has caused much dissatisfaction amongst them. One prince alone has from 30,000 to 40,000 horses, which he feeds in the usual Kalmuck manner by wandering from place to place in search of good fodder. If he and other Kalmucks are to be restricted to one locality, they contend that their horses and cattle will soon eat up all the grazing in that locality, and then they will starve. The Russian merchants at Biisk are vitally interested in this question, seeing that the bulk of their trade is with the Kalmucks. When, therefore, it was rumoured in Biisk that the Kalmucks were going to hold a big meeting and pass a decision to migrate to other parts, possibly Mongolia, unless this law was altered, certain of the merchants rode post-haste to the meeting, and begged the Kalmucks to postpone their decision pending the merchants' appeal to get the measure altered, and there the matter stands.

There are many Kalmuck legends regarding the naming of the numerous rivers and streams in the Altai district; the Katoon signifying "bride," the Biya "bridegroom," and the Ob "father"; a lengthy legend supplies the links which explain how the Katoon and Biya decided to join forces and form themselves into the Ob.

The question of the supply of fuel at Biisk is beginning to assume serious proportions. Wood is getting scarce, and cakes made of cattle manure mixed with straw are more and more taking its place. Coal, which costs eighteen to twenty kopecks a pood, or about thirty shillings a ton, has to be brought from Tomsk, and yet within 200 versts to the east of Biisk there is a place, Kuznetsk, between the Yenisei and the Ob, where there is said to be the finest anthracite coal; the coal crop appearing almost on the surface. Nothing has been done to start a coal mine, and nothing will be done, I suppose, until the railway is completed. It is hard to understand such apathy, unless it be that the "Cabinet" is the obstructionist. The "Cabinet" is the name given to the department at St. Petersburg which looks after the Tsar's private property. The latter includes the mining rights for gold, coal, and minerals. Permission to work gold or coal mines has to be granted through the Cabinet.

The scarcity of wood is accounted for by the fact that Government forests, where apparently are the only trees that have not been cut down, are under the strict vigilance of the Forestry Department, and I can only suppose that the beautiful forests which surround Biisk belong to the Government and are therefore inviolate. From the spectacular point of

view I am glad of this ; the peasants, I expect, are sorry.

Now let me give an instance of real energy which contrasts forcibly with the lethargy *in re* the coal at Kuznetsk.

Eighty versts south of Biisk is the village of Stara Barkisty ; here the inhabitants have set to work and supplied themselves with electric light, obtaining the necessary power from the waters of a mountain stream in the vicinity—the only instance in Siberia of a village, unaided by the proximity of a town, equipping itself with electric power for light, mills, butter manufacture, etc.

Per contra, to turn from what is modern to the strange and unaccountable. Fifty versts the other side of Biisk there is a stream, branching off the Katoon, which has no current to speak of, and yet never freezes during the winter, though the temperature varies from 30 to 40 degrees below zero.

Biisk is most up to date, and has electric light in all its streets and most of its houses, including the hotel where I stayed. It possesses a cinematograph theatre, which I visited with Mr. Cunningham, views purporting to be of England being put on perhaps for our special benefit ! It has a club, of which my friend was an honorary member, numerous bands, a Bishop, a Mayor who presides over the

deliberations of the Town Council, a small detachment of troops, many officials of all descriptions, including a very efficient and competent Chief of Police, whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making.

I must not omit to mention its daily paper, the *Altai*, which got itself into disgrace by printing what it thought about Mongolia, and so is now not allowed to print news about that country until first censored by competent officials.

Nor can I leave Biisk without some allusion to the great trial which has yet to take place. About eight years ago, when Russia was much troubled with the Revolutionary propaganda, there arrived at Biisk an officer of the Police Detective Force, who told two prominent citizens that they were to consider themselves as under arrest. Thereupon there was great public agitation, which culminated in six well-known men being chosen as spokesmen to demand the release of the two citizens. The officer refused. The matter looked critical, and as he did not want to be lynched he agreed to their release and departed. Nothing more was heard of the matter until, to their surprise, the six spokesmen were informed by the Chief of Police that they were under arrest, and were not to leave Biisk. They are allowed to carry on their business, and last year a serious attempt

was made to have their case tried and finished. However, as only 450 out of the 600 witnesses for the trial could be produced, it could not take place! The whole affair reflects discreditably on Russian judicial methods, and if it were not true, one might call it farcical, that six people should be under arrest for a matter that happened eight years ago in which they merely voiced the opinion of the majority and were chosen as spokesmen because of their good names and respectability.

Many stories are told of Russian priests, some true and others exaggerated, and perhaps I have already been an offender in this respect.

The following stories, which have the merit of being true, were told me by Mr. Cunningham about priests in the vicinity of Biisk.

The first deals with a sporting parson. In Russia, priests are not allowed to shoot, and so the hero of this little yarn, who was a keen sportsman, used to take his walks abroad accompanied by a boy who carried a gun. When he met any human being the priest was apparently in deep meditation. When he saw any game he quickly took the gun from the boy, got in his right and left, as the case may be, handed back the gun, and went on his way. He is a fine shot, and very rarely misses his bird.

The other story deals with a different type of cleric.

This gentleman was in the habit of charging arbitrary and excessive fees for doing what was his duty, viz. marrying, baptizing, and burying the villagers, so much so that a number of them were married without going through the religious ceremony.

One day a man from a neighbouring village wished to marry a girl in the priest's village, and asked his fee. "25 roubles," said the priest. The bridegroom protested, but paid. However, on the day fixed for the wedding, when he was actually on his way to the church, he died suddenly. The priest was asked to bury him without any further fee, as he had received 25 roubles for doing nothing. He refused, and said that 10 roubles was his fee for burying the young man. This money was paid, and the funeral took place. The villagers soon got wind of this story, and held an indignation meeting, to which they summoned the priest, and told him that he would have to abide by a fixed scale of charges for funerals, weddings, and baptisms, or leave the village. He was allowed, however, to continue to exercise his privilege of collecting tribute in kind at certain great festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, etc.

Now for the sequel. The season was Easter, the priest was driving round in his cart collecting offerings. He came to the house of the girl who was to have been a bride, Nobody was at home except her crippled father. The priest spied two fat geese in the yard, and asked if he could have one. "No," said the cripple, "take a chicken instead." The priest, thinking that as he only had a cripple to deal with, the principle of might is right could be enforced, proceeded to chase a goose, and was assisted in his hunt by his coachman. This was the cripple's opportunity. He quietly crept up to the priest's cart, cut the net in which his loot was confined, and let them all loose. Such a hullabaloo then arose, chickens, ducks, turkeys, etc., screaming and making off in all directions, priest and coachman neglecting the geese, trying to recapture them. To cut a long story short, the priest was at last brought to reason, refunded the 25 roubles that he had accepted for the marriage that had never taken place, also the 10 roubles for burying the young man, and promised to amend his ways.

We stayed at Biisk for three days, and on hearing that the river was free of ice, and open to traffic between Barnaul and Novo Nikolaievsk, left on 8th May, travelling by the steamship *Carmilietz*. I had a cabin to myself, and was most comfortable.

There is not much variety about the scenery on the banks of the Ob, chiefly mud banks, sometimes with trees on the top. We passed stations at Pristan, Logastiva, and Rastcasihar, where we stopped to pick up cargo and passengers, and arrived at Barnaul at midday on 9th May. It is a large and prosperous town, the centre of the butter industry, and is named as the prospective capital of the new province of Altai as soon as the present province of Tomsk is divided into two parts. The importance of the Altai district and its proximity to Mongolia certainly warrant such a step. It has been talked about for years, but nothing has yet happened.

We left at two in the afternoon. I ought to mention that there is a large and thriving German colony at Barnaul, who have been settled there for the last 200 years. Although Russian subjects, they have preserved their own national characteristics and have their own church.

We passed many steamers packed with passengers, and barges loaded with cargo of all descriptions, farm implements being very prominent.

After leaving Barnaul we passed stations at ten places, the most important being at Carmenda and Bersk.

We arrived at Novo Nikolaievsk late in the evening of the 10th May, passing under the railway

bridge in such torrents of wind and rain that we had to go some distance down stream before we could make fast to our anchorage near the bridge.

Mr. Consten remained on board for the night, and told us that during the night the storm increased to such an extent that the steamer tossed and rolled as if at sea.

Mr. Rozdolsky and I drove to the Grand Hotel, where we found the usual café chantant performance in full swing. In Siberia the essential characteristic of any hotel which has any pretensions to smartness is, that it shall be equipped with a band of musicians of both sexes, who put forth their greatest efforts between midnight and the small hours of the morning. The Chief of Police came to call on my companion, despite the lateness of the hour, and told me that he knew nothing about my luggage, which I had hoped to meet here. He said that there was a letter from Urga for me at the police station which would perhaps explain matters.

Next day I confidently hoped that we would have caught the train to St. Petersburg; but owing to the uncertainty as to the whereabouts of my luggage, and the fact that I had to visit both the post office and police station, it was impossible to do so. Instead, we listened to the strains of the band at the hotel, and then went to the local cinematograph.

The same evening Mr. Rozdolsky departed to Harbin, and our three weeks' association was over.

When I asked for an English newspaper at Novo Nikolaievsk railway stall, I was provided with a copy of *Tit-Bits* for 19th April 1913—the only English paper that they possessed. I was glad to read it, as the last paper that I had read was dated 16th January. Mr. Cunningham at Biisk had had no papers, as there had been continued breakdowns in the postal service since his arrival there, due to the badness of the weather and the roads.

Apropos of newspapers, extracts were frequently read for my benefit from the Russian papers detailing the latest exploits of the suffragettes in England, the Russians appearing to take a keen interest in the movement, but expressing their amazement as to how such tactics as burning churches, houses, etc., could advance the cause.

CHAPTER XVIII

BY TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY TO ST. PETERSBURG[1]

MY finances were in such a low state when I had paid for a second-class ticket to St. Petersburg on the ordinary express train that left Novo Nikolaievsk on Monday, 12th May, that I had slightly under 15 roubles with which to pay my expenses en route. My luggage I had left to its own devices, satisfying myself by wiring to the Chief of Police at Verhne Udinsk that if it had not already been sent, it was to follow me to St. Petersburg.[2] Mr. Consten was my travelling companion as far as Cheliabinsk, where we parted, he going to Moscow. There were also four Mongols on the train with whom he had many talks. They told him that they were natives of Hailar, and that they were on a mission from Urga to buy rifles at St. Petersburg. As regards current Mongolian news, they stated that

[1] Extracts from Mr. Perry-Ayscough's Diary.

[2] It subsequently arrived in England during August 1913.

there had been a fight in South Mongolia in which the Mongols had defeated the Chinese, capturing four machine guns ; that the Manchus in Manchuria were joining the Mongols in large numbers ; and that Mongols and Manchus had evacuated Hailar and moved farther west.

Whilst travelling from Cheliabinsk to St. Petersburg I made the acquaintance of Mr. MacGrath, a British engineer lately employed on the Troitze gold mine near Kotchkar, who was travelling home with his wife and little daughter. He told me of some of his experiences in Siberia. About two years ago he was manager of a gold mine at Kirchun, near Lake Zaizan Nor. He had to close this mine down during the winter months, when the roads were very bad. Food was also scarce, and he had had a very trying time in bringing the mine employés overland to the nearest town on the Irtish and thence by steamer up the river to Omsk.

As throwing an interesting sidelight on Kirghiz customs, which forbid the birth of children under roofs, he told me that he had seen a Kirghiz woman give birth to a child, in the middle of the winter when the temperature was freezing, in the snow outside a yurt. He said that the Kirghiz were very discontented, and appeared to be waiting for an opportunity to regain their independence.

The weather in Mongolia and Siberia is so very variable that a brief résumé of climatic conditions as I found them during my journey may not be out of place.

On arrival at Urga (18th March) a snowstorm was raging and the weather was very cold. A few days later, when leaving Urga (26th March) the sun was shining brightly and spring had evidently arrived. En route to Uliassutai one dived into the depths of winter, the cold being intense and the wind keen and penetrating. At Uliassutai (7th April) the weather was still cold, but a little warmer. Between Uliassutai and Kobdo wintry conditions prevailed, and the wind was bitter. At Kobdo (15th April) there was bright spring, and the sun shone daily. In the vicinity of Kobdo, when en route to Kosh Agatch, it was so warm that we took off our coats and had lunch sitting out of doors on the sand. Next day, and until we reached Kosh Agatch (25th April), the cold was intense and the wind bitter. By day we buried ourselves in furs, and by night ourselves and everything else in the yurts were frozen. Between Kosh Agatch and Biisk it was warm and springlike, though every now and again we met deep snow and ice. Near Engudai (1st May) we came into rain. Between Biisk (5th May) and Novo Nikolaievsk (10th May)

it was quite cold, and a strong wind was blowing, but afterwards until reaching St. Petersburg (16th May) spring conditions prevailed.

I attach a small table giving approximately the distances covered and expenses of my trip.

	Roubles.		£
Initial expenses at Harbin, fur coat, boots, etc.	100 = roughly		10
Verhne Udinsk–Kiachta, 250 versts, 3 days en route	70	„	7
Kiachta–Urga, 350 versts, 4 days en route	70	„	7
Urga–Uliassutai, 1200 versts, 12 days en route	150	„	15
Uliassutai–Kobdo, 500 versts, 6 days en route	70	„	7
Kobdo–Kosh Agatch, 350 versts, 7 days en route	130	„	13
Kosh Agatch–Biisk, 525 versts, 8 days en route	100	„	10
Totals, 3175 versts, 40 days en route	690	„	69
By steamer—			
Biisk–Novo Nikolaievsk, 800 versts, 3 days en route	50	„	5
Totals: 3975 versts, 43 days en route	740	„	74

It will thus be seen that I was travelling in a tarantass, except for occasional rides on horseback and one stage on a sleigh, for a little more than 3000 versts, or 2000 miles, having left Verhne Udinsk on 12th March and arriving at Biisk on 5th May, and that the total expenses of the journey amounted to about £74.

In the course of my journey through Mongolia I met but one fellow-countryman,—Mr. Staunton Pyper,—who had trekked across the Gobi Desert from Kalgan to Urga in a camel caravan, taking forty days en route. I met him at Urga during my stay there.

Mr. Grant of the Chinese Telegraph Service, whose sad death in Mongolia has recently taken place, and Mr. Henningsen, of the same service, who so gallantly endeavoured to rescue him, I had known at Peking, during my three years' residence in the capital.

Mr. Grant was a cheery, good-hearted fellow, always ready to do a good turn to anybody, and a thorough sportsman. He had accompanied the Scientific Expedition to Sianfu in Shansi province, promoted by Mr. Clarke. This expedition had come to an untimely termination, owing to the murder of an Indian member.

The death that befell Mr. Grant is just such an one as he would have chosen. He was offered liberty if he would leave his Chinese servants to be shot. His determination to stand by and be shot with them was worthy of the man and his country.

In bringing this record of my wanderings to a conclusion, I have to acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to all the Russian officials and merchants

with whom I came in contact, without whose kind assistance it would have been impossible for me to have undertaken the trip at all.

My journey was made under the most favourable conditions, thanks to my good fortune in travelling with Mr. Louba from Urga to Uliassutai and Kobdo, and with Mr. Rozdolsky from Kobdo to Kosh Agatch and Biisk. Everything was prepared for us, and as far as it was possible to have comfort in Mongolia, we had it.

I admit that I never left the beaten track, if such tracks as are found in Mongolia can be dignified by that name, and that I met with no adventures such as had fallen to the lot of my friend Mr. Consten.

I went into no unexplored regions, and make no claim to be an explorer, a sportsman, or a journalist. I have merely tried to record what I saw with my own eyes, and the impressions that I formed from intercourse with men far better qualified than myself to give their opinions on the regions that I traversed in Siberia and Mongolia.

APPENDIX A

THE PROTOCOL CONCLUDED BETWEEN RUSSIA AND MONGOLIA

IN accordance with Article 2 of the Agreement signed this day by Actual State Councillor Ivan Korostovetz on behalf of the Imperial Russian Government, and by Sain Noin Khan Namnansurun, President of the Mongolian Council of Ministers and Patron of 10,000 truths (here follow the names and ranks of the other Mongolian signatories), . . . on behalf of the Sovereign of Mongolia, the Mongolian Government and the Ruling Princes, the aforesaid Plenipotentiaries have agreed on the following articles, in which are laid down the rights and privileges, a portion of which are already enjoyed by Russian subjects in Mongolia, and likewise the rights and privileges of Mongolian subjects in Russia.

Article 1

Russian subjects shall, as in the past, enjoy the right of freely living and travelling in all parts of Mongolia, to carry on all manner of trade, industry, and other business, as well as to enter into business agreements with individuals, firms, and institutions,

official or private, Russian, Mongolian, Chinese or foreign.

ARTICLE 2

Russian subjects shall, as in the past, have the right to import and export at all times, free of import and export duty, all manner of products of the soil and industry of Russia, Mongolia, China and other countries, and trade in them freely without payment of any duties or taxes whatsoever.

The provisions of this article shall not apply to mixed Russo-Chinese undertakings, or to Russian subjects who fictitiously declare themselves to be the owners of goods which do not belong to them.

ARTICLE 3

Russian banks shall have the right of opening branches in Mongolia, and carrying on all manner of financial and other business, both with individuals and with institutions and companies.

ARTICLE 4

Russian subjects may buy and sell for ready money, or by bartering goods, and may enter into credit transactions.

Neither the principalities (*hoshuns*) nor the Mongolian treasury shall be held responsible for the debts of private individuals.

Article 5

The Mongolian authorities shall not prevent Mongols or Chinese from doing business with Russian subjects, or from entering into their personal service, or the service of commercial and industrial institutions founded by them.

No official or private societies, institutions, or individuals in Mongolia shall be granted any monopoly in the sphere of trade or industry.

It is understood that companies and individuals, who have been granted such monopolies by the Mongol Government before the conclusion of the present Agreement, shall retain their rights and privileges until the expiration of the stipulated term.

Article 6

Russian subjects shall have the right to lease and purchase lands in all towns and principalities (*hoshuns*) for the establishment of commercial and industrial undertakings and for the erection of houses, shops, and stores.

Moreover, Russian subjects shall have the right of leasing free lands for agricultural purposes. It is understood that such lands shall be acquired and rented for the above-mentioned purposes, but not for speculative purposes. Such lands shall be allotted by agreement with the Mongolian Government, and according to the laws existing in Mongolia in all parts of the country with the

exception of pastures and lands set apart for religious purposes.

ARTICLE 7

Russian subjects shall have the right of entering into agreements with the Mongolian Government concerning the working of mines, forests, fisheries, etc.

ARTICLE 8

The Russian Government shall have the right of appointing Consuls by agreement with the Mongolian Government in such parts of Mongolia as it may consider necessary.

Correspondingly, the Mongolian Government shall have the right of appointing its agents in such frontier lands of the Russian Empire as may be found needful by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 9

In places where Russian Consulates are established, and likewise in other places of importance for Russian trade, special settlements will be established by agreement between the Russian Consuls and the Mongolian Government for the accommodation and business purposes of Russians.

Such settlements to be under the exclusive administration of the said Consuls, or, where there are no Consuls, of the elders of the Russian commercial communities.

Article 10

Russian subjects shall retain the right of organising at their own expense, for the forwarding of letters and the transport of goods, a postal service, both between various places in Mongolia and between the said places and points on the Russian frontier, by agreement with the Mongolian Government.

In case of the erection of station houses and other necessary buildings, the rules laid down in Article 6 of this Protocol shall be observed.

Article 11

Russian Consuls in Mongolia shall have the right, in case of necessity, of using the Mongolian Government Post for the forwarding of official correspondence, the dispatch of official messengers, and for other official purposes, provided that the number of horses supplied to them free of charge shall not exceed one hundred monthly, that the number of camels shall not exceed thirty monthly, and that they obtain a special pass from the Mongolian Government on each occasion.

For travelling purposes the Consuls and Russian officials shall have the use of the same institutions for money payment.

The right to use Mongolian Postal Stations shall extend likewise to private individuals who are Russian subjects, the payment in such cases being fixed by agreement with the Mongolian Government.

Article 12

Russian subjects shall have the right of sailing Russian trading vessels and carrying on trade with the population residing along the banks of such rivers as flow through Mongolia, and further through Russian territory, and on the affluents of such rivers.

The Russian Government shall give the Mongolian Government aid in the matter of the improvement of the navigation of such rivers, of buoying and lighting them, etc.; whilst the Mongolian Government shall allot along these rivers the lands necessary for the mooring of vessels, the erection of landing stages and store houses, the storing of fuel and so forth, subject in such cases to the provisions embodied in Article 6 of this Protocol.

Article 13

For the transport of goods and live stock, Russian subjects shall have the right to use all roads and waterways, and, by agreement with the Mongolian Government, may at their own expense build bridges, establish ferries, etc., with the right to collect a special toll from travellers.

Article 14

Live stock belonging to Russian subjects when being driven may be halted for rest and pasture.

In the case of a prolonged halt being necessary,

the local authorities shall allot along cattle-driving routes, and in places of importance for the breeding of cattle, sufficient pasture lands.

For the use of such pasture for a term of more than three months, payment shall be required.

Article 15

The established custom according to which the Russian border population may cut grass, hunt, and fish on the Mongolian side of the frontier shall remain unchanged in the future.

Article 16

Business agreements between Russian subjects and institutions on the one hand, and Mongols and Chinese on the other, may be verbal or written, and the contracting parties may present such agreements to the local authorities for certification. Should the latter find any obstacle to the certification of such agreements, they shall immediately inform the Russian Consul of the fact, and the matter shall be decided by agreement with him.

It is provided that agreements concerned with real estate must be written and submitted for certification and confirmation to the proper Mongolian officials, and to the Russian Consul.

Documents concerning the right of exploiting the natural wealth of the country require the confirmation of the Mongolian Government.

Should disputes arise concerning agreements contracted verbally or in writing, the parties may settle the matter by arbitration.

Should arbitration fail to decide the question, the latter shall be settled by a mixed commission.

Mixed commissions shall be permanent or temporary.

Permanent commissions shall be instituted in the places of residence of Russian Consuls, and shall consist of the Consul or his representative and a delegate from the Mongolian authorities bearing corresponding rank.

Temporary commissions shall be instituted in other places than the Consular residences, and shall consist of representatives of the Consul and of the Prince of that district to which the respondent belongs or in which he resides.

Mixed commissions may call on competent persons, such being Russian subjects, Mongols or Chinese, to act as experts.

The decisions of mixed commissions shall be put into force without delay,—with regard to Russian subjects, by the Russian Consul; and with regard to Mongols and Chinese, by the Prince of the district to which the respondent belongs, or in which he resides.

Article 17

This Protocol shall come into force on the date of its signature.

In witness of the above the respective Plenipotentiaries, having found, on comparing the parallel texts of the present Protocol—in Russian and in Mongolian prepared in two copies—that the said texts agree with one another, have signed each of them, affixed their seals, and interchanged the said texts.

Signed at Urga on the 21st day of October 1912, and, according to the Mongolian chronology, in the second year of the reign of "Him who is exalted by all," on the 24th day of the last month of Autumn.

(Signed and sealed) IVAN KOROSTOVETZ.

(Here follow the Signatures and Seals of the Mongolian Signatories.)

APPENDIX B

KALGAN TO URGA BY TELEGRAPH ROUTE

	Names of Stages.	Distances.		Remarks.
		Intermediate.	Total.	
		Miles.	Miles.	
Ch'a-Ha-Jih.	Kalgan . .	...	...	The road leaves Kalgan at the N. gate and, bearing west, up a dry river-bed; rocky and stony and a steep ascent. The telegraph runs some way to the S. of this road and not visible; but the wall can be seen on the hills to the S. of the road on leaving Kalgan.
	T'u-Ch'ing-tzu	9	9	A small village and inn.
	Han-no-p'a	5½	14½	A collection of inns up to Han-no-p'a, stony and steep, with hills on each side; the last 1½ miles very steep. From here for 12 li a bad, stony road, afterwards a descent to a grassy plateau with undulating hillocks for miles each side. Some large patches of cultivation: wheat, oats, Kalgan peas and beans. Pass through various Chinese settlements, prosperous-looking. Land cultivated in large stretches; shops in hamlets passed through, troops of horses and oxen. At Miao-t'an a large temple.
	Huan-hua-p'ing	3½	18	
	Po-lon-chê .	7	25	
	Miao-t'an .	7	32	
	Hai-Shui-hu (Tu-kung)	21	53	Chinese settlements en route. Some cultivation, no trees, plateau slightly undulating. Telegraph line to S. of road visible at intervals.

APPENDIX B

	Names of Stages.	Distances. Intermediate.	Distances. Total.	Remarks.
		Miles.	Miles.	
Ta-ma-ch'un.	Ma-hi-t'u .	4	57	We pass the last of the Chinese settlements; see the first of the Mongol huts. No more cultivation; N.W. wind all day, cold. A very gradual rise, but plateau undulating land; water plentiful.
	Hsiao-Miao-tzu	10	67	
	P'ang-hong .	5	72	
	T'a-pu-hai-la	10	82	
	Tsao-hao-kê-er	10	92	Summer grazing ground for Mongols; undulating. Two small river-beds dry; water plentiful; road sandy; grazing excellent.
	Tao-la-h'u-tu-kê	7	99	
	O. kê-t'u .	10	109	
	Tsa-ling-kê-lo	8	117	Gradual ascent. Telegraph line to W. Flocks of sheep, cows, etc. Water every few miles, but rather brackish; country undulating; grazing good.
	B'ok-ting-kê-lo	7	124	
	Sil-bern	5	129	
Hisi Hsu-ni-wang.	U-lan-nao .	6	135	As above, but water ponds with duck on them; still slightly undulating.
	Bon-ying-nao	14	149	
	Tu-hu-mung	5	154	Country now on to Bang-Kiang. Grazing indifferent, dreary. Telegraph station on rising ground. Water ample, but rather brackish.
	H'ung-shan	8	162	
	Bang-Kiang	14	176	Telegraph station, actual distance telegraph wire, Kalgan to Bang-Kiang, 155 miles.
	San-pu-lang	10	186	Pasture improves; stream and ponds, but no wells. A Lama temple, permanent landmark.
	H'o-lo-t'o-miao	10	196	
	H'ua-er-la-shu	17	213	Good water; country the same, but grass still good.
	Po-lu-ting .	16	229	
	Shang-yen-hao	20	249	Curious cliff country chalk, and grazing indifferent. Dug for water 1½ feet.

APPENDIX B

	Names of Stages.	Distances. Intermediate.	Distances. Total.	Remarks.
		Miles.	Miles.	
Tung-hsu-Kê-wang.	Hsa-chi-kê-t'u	6	255	Salt lake district passed; two within sight of road not being worked; water brackish.
	Ku-t'u-lu .	13	268	
	Mê-ri-ka-sao	10	278	
	T'u-ku-lu .	8	286	Undulating country and rocky; grass good; water brackish, but still plentiful.
	Ka-chi-ka-sao	10	296	
	K'o-bal . .	10	306	
Mê-ro-Ko-wang.	Ude . . .	17	323	Telegraph station, Bang-Kiang to Ude by wire, 147 miles.
	U-dung . .	10	333	
	Tao-la . .	13	346	
	San-chin .	13	359	A Lama temple, landmark.
	Er-kung-u-lau	18	377	
	Su-t'u-u-lau	6	383	
	Wu-chu-er .	20	403	
	Sâ-wu-shu .	13	416	
Chang-chung-Pei-li.	Tâ-t'a-la .	26	442	This distance no water.
	Wei-chên .	6	448	
	A-t'a-kan-nâ	3	451	
	Mofi-wu-shu	13	464	
	Wu-lan-hu-tuk	3	467	
	K'u-li-an-de-re	8	475	
	Ha-ta-mo-rê	5	480	
	Ma-ni-t'u .	10	490	
	Pi-li-ker-a-ma	4	494	
	Tuerin . .	13	507	Telegraph station, Ude to Tuerin by wire, 168 miles.
	A-la-k'un-de-lang	13	520	
	Au-kê-morer	3	523	
	Sa-la-ho-shan	7	530	
	Ai-pu-tzu .	8	538	
	Shi-li-h'u-t'uk	22	560	
	Ku-le-pan-t'on-le-kai	8	568	

	Names of Stages.	Distances. Intermediate.	Distances. Total.	Remarks.
		Miles.	Miles.	
Pei-tzu.	Ou-kê-morer	5	573	
	A-tao-tslor .	13	586	
	Sai-shan-tan	13	599	
	Ta-ba . .	27	626	
	Urga . .	26	652	Telegraph station, Tuerin to Urga by wire, 143 miles.

For a general description of the country traversed I divide up the route into sections between the telegraphic stations en route : *i.e.* (*a*) Kalgan to Bang-Kiang, (*b*) Bang-Kiang to Ude, (*c*) Ude to Tuerin, (*d*) Tuerin to Urga,—and to avoid repetition of names I have denoted these sections by the letters, (*a*) (*b*) (*c*) (*d*) respectively.

Section (*a*).—Leaving Kalgan, the road runs up a dry river-bed to the west. The road is very bad indeed, and ascent very steep. On each side are steep hills with but little vegetation, and a portion of the wall can be seen appearing and disappearing on the hills to the south. The telegraph line becomes visible on approaching Han-no-p'a. The

road leaves the river-bed some few miles before reaching the village of Han-no-p'a, and commences a steep ascent up to that place and the Mongolian plateau. Han-no-p'a is merely a collection of indifferent Chinese inns, the halting-place for carters who use the telegraph and the ox-cart road. About 4 miles outside Han-no-p'a, a very rough and somewhat undulating road brings the traveller into the Chinese settlement,—the road running over a slightly undulating plateau through the midst of cultivated ground, where long stretches of wheat, Kalgan peas, etc., are grown, and a few herds of oxen, flocks of sheep, and troops of horses are seen. Dotted here and there are the Chinese settlers' houses, and the road passes through one or two hamlets where there are Chinese shops, inns, etc. Along this stretch of country the road is good and hard, and the telegraph line can be seen at frequent intervals. About 77 miles from Kalgan the last of these settlements is passed, and cultivation ceases.

In place of this cultivation the road passes over "plateau country" slightly undulating, with a view to each side of the road of undulating grass country, stony, with grass, very nutritious, growing in small clumps. Here and there a group of Mongol huts is visible, and every few miles a well is found by the roadside. The telegraph line at this point runs parallel with and a little to the east of the road. As it is good hard going all over this country the road from time to time alters. Here and there a herd of

oxen, flock of sheep, or troop of horses in charge of a Mongolian is seen. Transport animals pick up their food from this grass day by day, eked out with a very small quantity of grain. The well water is brackish, but so far plentiful—wells being about 6 to 10 feet deep in this locality. In addition, almost constant ponds and slightly marshy land are found, most of which have duck on them. Within 50 miles of Bang-Kiang the country becomes more rocky and hilly, and Bang-Kiang itself is situated in a more "desert-like" country than up to this point has been passed. The water here is very brackish, and the well 30 feet deep. A few dry water courses are passed before reaching Bang-Kiang.

Section (*b*).—After leaving Bang-Kiang the road runs through the same undulating "gritty grassy" country, with a view to miles on each side of the road, and to the north-west in the far distance a glimpse of what appear to be high hills. The grazing improves, and troops of horses are passed en route. Though on the road itself some 40 li on water is scarce—about 70 li from Bang-Kiang "Ho To" temple is passed, one of the few permanent landmarks en route. The grass remains good until a barren chalky plateau is passed over; and shortly after this two large salt lakes on the east and one to the west are visible, and a salt stream, which gives the impression of flowing water at a distance, is crossed. From here onwards the road again passes through a zone of good grazing. The

country becomes more undulating, and a dry bed of a river with a trickle of water forms the road for some little distance. One stunted tree is seen, and the road winds down a gradual descent to Ude, situated behind a rocky hill.

Section (*c*).—For about 80 li the country is "undulating plateau" grass-land, and 70 li from Ude a temple is passed. After this the country becomes very rocky. The road remains excellent, water is found in wells about every 10 miles, and one or two small brackish streams are crossed. After this the road passes over plateau country with a scarcity of water, which has to be carried for 50 li. Leaving this plateau, the road descends over rocky ground, passing large brackish ponds, marshy land, and streams with wild fowl on them. It then runs on through undulating ground, passes between two large lakes, emerges on to another plateau, and then again ascends to fine country with the "Tuerin" hill in the distance. The road winds through constant but deep valleys, with rich grazing, watered by various small streams and rivers (now dry), and eventually reaches Tuerin Telegraph Station, with a Lama monastery a few li to the west. All round Tuerin the country takes on a different aspect,—instead of clumps of grass, the grazing is verdant and almost luxuriant, with troops of horses, etc., grazing in the small valleys.

Section (*d*).—The country from here on to Urga alters considerably. Constant valleys with fine

luxurious grazing are passed through, and troops of horses, herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep can be seen en route. The road for some 10 miles follows a stream. The country is a succession of valleys with fine grazing, and continues thus until the road runs through a succession of "park-like" country some 175 li from Urga. The road about 80 to 90 li from Urga winds into the main Urga valley, some two or three miles in width. Here in this valley the telegraph road is joined by the eastern ox-cart road, and by a few temporary tracks used by the Mongolians from outlying districts; these form one main thoroughfare which crosses the Tola River into Urga itself.

APPENDIX C

FROM URGA TO KIACHTA

No. of Stage.	Name of Stage.	Distances.	Remarks.
1	Kuei-ch'i .	The total distance between Urga and Kiachta is approximately 250 miles.	Road bad over mountains.
2	Bologatai, or Bergaltai		Road good.
3	Hun-ch'a .		Road good; excellent grazing.
4	Hu-lu-mu-ko-t'u		Lama temple and lamasery; excellent grazing.
5	H'a-la, or Haragol		Nearest point on Government stage Relay Road to Yero Mine. This stage on river.
6	Pai-Yang-Kao		Road good; good grazing.
7	Er-Mên-t'u		... ...
8	K'un-t'un .		... ...
9	Yu-lu, or Yero		On river Yero.
10	Pa-ch'a-ko		Crossing river Yero in ferry, pass through wood of 2 or 3 miles, move into fine pastures, and cross swollen stream, arrive Pa-ch'a-ko.
11	Ssû-la-ch'a		Through fertile valley enter wood extending 8 miles; emerging, see Kiachta on slope of hill, 12 miles distant.
12	Kiachta (Mai-mai-chên)		The telegraph line is seen at intervals along this road, from Urga to Kiachta.

No. of Stage.	Name of Stage.	Distance.		Remarks.
		Intermediate.	Total.	
		Miles.	Miles.	
12	Mai-mai-chên, Russian Kiachta	0	0	At the junction of these two towns is the Russian Custom-house.
	Troizcavavsk	2¾	2¾	Leaving this town by the main north Relay Road, move for 8 miles north, then west, which brings one to Ust Kiachta, on the Selenga River.
	Ust Kiachta	16	18¾	
	Selenginsk	...	...	Half-way house by river and by road from Troizcavavsk to Verhne Udinsk. Steamers run from here daily.
	Verhne Udinsk	...	...	Distance not measured. Steamers down stream take twelve hours to complete journey, up stream thirty-six hours. Country en route fine grazing, with flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and troops of horses. Settlers scattered at varying distances on either bank of river, who cultivate the ground in patches.

The main Government Relay Road has actually twelve stages (t'ais) between Urga and Kiachta. The distance between two stages is supposed to be 60 li, but as a matter of fact they vary considerably. The use of the relay horses can only be

obtained by those possessing an official pass, and the road is used only by officials as a general rule,—as a matter of fact, the Chinese Imperial Post and the Russian Post both use this road, and the ponies en route, but they have a private arrangement by which they hire horses from the Mongols at the stages. On each side of this road are ox and camel roads, varying according to the time of the year and the grazing. To the east, and running almost parallel to the Relay Road, is a line of stages used by the Mongolore Gold Mining Company, who have again made private arrangements with the Mongols for the use of ponies en route.

Leaving Urga at the east, one strikes the Relay Road at right angles (to the south moving to Kalgan, to the north to Kiachta). There is a steep ascent over a stony and well-wooded pass of the mountains separating the Urga valley from the Bogolatai (or Bergaltai) valleys. On descending the northern side of this pass the country opens into a succession of lovely valleys—some 3 miles or more in width, others under one mile—joined by "necks" of land with easy gradient. The road all the way is good, and the rather gravelly nature of the road prevents it from becoming impassable in rainy weather. The grazing is "first class." The herds of sheep, cattle and troops of horses are sleek and fat. The first Chinese colonists' houses actually en route are met with between K'un-t'un and Yu-lu; evidence of the existence of settlers

to the west and east can be seen by the cultivation up the valleys—and by riding a few miles on either side of the Relay Road after leaving H'un-ch'a settlers' houses are met with.

The valleys on each side of the main road are well wooded, and all well watered. The country for miles on each side of this Relay Road is one succession of well-wooded, well-watered valleys with fine pastures, providing grazing for many flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and troops of horses. At each stage are Mongol huts or yurts 8 feet in diameter and felt-covered. I left the main Relay Road at stage Ha-la, travelling across country to the east, and only rejoined the main road at stage Yu-lu, so I am unable to describe this intervening country, but I understand it is much the same as the other stages. At Ha-la there is no means of crossing the river when in flood except on two dug-out rafts. The horses have to swim across the stream.

APPENDIX D

STAGES BETWEEN URGA AND ULIASSUTAI

THE names and distances are not to be accepted as correct. They are arrived at partly from information obtained at Urga, and partly from the Mongols at the various stages.

Stage.	Names of Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Distance.	Time en route.	
		Versts.	Hours.	
1st	Urga–Sharahu .	35	4	Difficult, up hill.
2nd	Sharahu–Duriat	30	3	Easy, good path.
3rd	Duriat–Lunghochi	35	4	,, ,,
4th	Lunghochi–Burhout	40	4	,, ,,
5th	Burhout–Uhar .	30	4	Difficult, hills, river.
6th	Uhar–Nara Ulun	30	3	Easy, good path.
7th	Nara Ulun–Girasantu	40	4	,, ,,
8th	Girasantu–Olchor	30	4	Difficult, hills, snow, river.
9th	Olchor–Barutu .	40	6	Difficult, ponies weak, melting snow.
10th	Barutu–Saburnt	20	2	Easy, good path.
11th	Saburnt–Borghiknor	30	4	Difficult, hills.
12th	Borghiknor–Bugdere	25	3	Easy, good path.
13th	Bugdere–Zachiot	30	4	Difficult, hills and rocks.
14th	Zachiot–Uzun Buluk	35	4	Difficult, hills, stony.

APPENDIX D

Stage.	Names of Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Distance.	Time en route.	
		Versts.	Hours.	
15th	Uzun Buluk–Budun	35	3	Easy.
16th	Budun–Garit .	30	3	Difficult, hills, rocks.
17th	Garit–Taza . .	30	3	Difficult, rocks.
18th	Taza–Hutuk . .	40	4	Difficult, rocks, hills.
19th	Hutuk–Shagertu	25	2	Very easy, good path.
20th	Shagertu–Tui .	30	3	Easy, rivers.
21st	Tui–Ortayhar .	30	3	Easy, good path.
22nd	Ortayhar–Olchoi	20	2	Easy, hills.
23rd	Olchoi–Utar . .	40	4	Difficult, hills, rivers, rocks.
24th	Utar–Baidarik .	35	4	Easy, river, snow.
25th	Baidarik–Zach .	20	1½	Very easy, good path.
26th	Zach–Hobul . .	20	2	Easy, hills, good path.
27th	Hobul–Ulambumbar	20	2	,, ,,
28th	Ulambumbar–Ubergergalantu	30	4	Difficult, rocky hills.
29th	Ubergergalantu–Argergalantu	35	5	Difficult, mountains, snow.
30th	Argergalantu–Hugeert	20	3	Difficult, river, rocky valley.
31st	Hugeert–Dagandaly	20	4	Very difficult, mountains, snow.
32nd	Dagandaly–Tumurt	35	9	Very difficult, deep snow.
33rd	Tumurt–Shorik .	30	5	Difficult, snow, hills.
34th	Shorik–Sherat .	20	4	Difficult, rocky road, hills.
35th	Sherat–Uliassutai	20	6	Very difficult, mountains, snow, rivers.

APPENDIX E

STAGES BETWEEN ULIASSUTAI AND KOBDO

Stage.	Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Versts.	Hours.	
1st	Uliassutai–Altar	30	3½	Stony route, by river Zagasti.
2nd	Altar–Borhor .	30	4	Very difficult, snow, mountains.
3rd	Borhor–Huduk Ulan	20	1½	Easy, good road, over grassy hills.
4th	Huduk Ulan–Ihudziss	20	2½	Sandy tract along river Zachingol.
5th	Ihudziss–Bagaziss	30	3½	,, ,,
6th	Bagaziss–Zur .	30	4	Sandy tract and steep hills.
7th	Zur–Borgu .	40	5	Very difficult, crossing river Zachingol, deep sand.
8th	Borgu–Argalantu	40	6½	Very difficult, deep sand all the way.
9th	Argalantu–Borganor	35	4½	Difficult, sand.
10th	Borganor–Duganor	35	5	Very difficult, crossing sandhills.
11th	Duganor–Haragan	25	3	Route good, ponies and Mongols bad.

APPENDIX E

Stage.	Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Versts.	Hours.	
12th	Haragan – Girgalantu	25	3	Stony route, gradual ascent.
13th	Girgalantu–Zahabuluk Usu	30	3½	,, ,,
14th	Zahabuluk Usu–Harasu	40	4	Very difficult, steep pass over mountain, crossing ice over lake, Mongols excellent.
15th	Harasu–Kobdo.	40	5	Very difficult, lake swamps and reeds; steep, rocky hills.

APPENDIX F

STAGES BETWEEN KOBDO AND KOSH AGATCH

Stage.	Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Versts.	Hours.	
1st	Kobdo–Mingit. .	50	8	Rocky road to Puyintugol, easy over plain, difficult crossing Kobdo River.
2nd	Mingit–Ulam Mungip.	60	10	Difficult all the way; stones, sand, and rocky pass.
3rd	Ulam Mungip–Tabusta	45	6½	Rocky hills, wild scenery.
4th	Tabusta–Achitnor	60	8	Difficult, sand, rocks, desolate region, road bad.
5th	Achitnor–Chaganor	40	6	Steep ascents and descents, thick snow, difficult, bitterly cold.
6th	Chaganor–Kirghiz encampment over Russian frontier.	55	8	Rocky, snow, hills.
7th	Kirghiz encampment–Kosh Agatch.	30	2½	Difficult, river Chuya, snow, ice, and stones, horses went well.

There is an alternative route, reckoned to be quicker, which follows the Mongol stages at Suharabuluk, Hongo, Minorulen, Uhar, Shiratu, Hatu, Ulige, Behu, Borbugasif, Suwok, Kakhoruk, and Ganmordu—twelve stages in all. There is considerable risk of delay by taking this route, as the ponies are very weak and are very difficult to catch.

APPENDIX G

STAGES BETWEEN KOSH AGATCH AND BIISK

Stage.	Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Distance.	Time taken en route.	
		Versts.	Hours.	
1st	Kosh Agatch–Kumtonar	35	4½	Very difficult, snow, ice, rivers, rocks.
2nd	Kumtonar–Kurai	27	3½	Very difficult, rocks, deep snow.
3rd	Kurai–Barotalar	20	3	Very difficult, steep ascents and descents, deep snow, dangerous.
4th	Barotalar–Chibit	17	2	Melting snow, good road.
5th	Chibit–Aigoluk .	22	3	Good road at first over plain, then steep, winding along mountain side.
6th	Aigoluk–Yadri .	25	3	Very dangerous, precipitous cliffs.
7th	Yadri–Ousenya .	35	4	Very difficult, rocky hills, but good at first.
8th	Ousenya–Kurkuchi	25	3	Crossed river three times, difficult, dangerous.
9th	Kurkuchi–Engudai	42	5½	Good road to the Pass, then very tortuous, dangerous by river bank.
10th	Engudai–Tingar	37	3	Good road, crossed two streams.
11th	Tingar–Pestchaniyar	23	2½	Good at first, then very difficult.
12th	Pestchaniyar–Topu Chaiyar	15	2½	Very difficult, very dangerous.

APPENDIX G

Stage.	Places.	Approximate		Remarks.
		Distance.	Time taken en route.	
		Versts.	Hours.	
13th	Topu Chaiyar–Shebailenor	20	2	Muddy road by side of a torrent.
14th	Shebailenor–Miyutai	15	1¼	Good road downhill.
15th	Miyutai–Chergan	20	1¾	Bad road, horses good.
16th	Chergan–Kamad	25	3¼	Very difficult, quagmires, mountain sides very steep.
17th	Kamad–Altaisk.	27	2½	Very difficult, road and mountain torrent intermingled.
18th	Altaisk–Belokurihar	25	2	Road swampy, snow drifts.
19th	Belokurihar–Smolenskaia	25	3	Road swampy.
20th	Smolenskaia–Katoonsk	12	1	Good road.
21st	Katoonsk–Biisk	17	2	Crossed Katoon and Biya, swampy road connecting the two rivers.

AFTERWORD

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION

SINCE this Book went to the Press, there have been various alterations in the political situation of Mongolia. What the outcome will be it is impossible to conjecture. Information from Urga shows that the recently signed Russo-Chinese convention was received with but scant favour by the Mongols.

It is almost natural that the Mongols should take exception to Russia's recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Outer Mongolia, and to the fact that Russia acknowledges Mongolia as a part of China.

Up to the time of writing, it is not known whether the Mongols will accept the Russo-Chinese convention and join in the future negotiations, or whether they will refuse to accept it, and continue to fight with the Chinese. In the meantime the Mongol Mission, headed by Sain-Noin Khan,[1]

[1] The portraits that have appeared in some of the English illustrated papers describe the Prince as "President Elect of Mongolia." This statement is misleading, as Mongolia is ruled by the Hu-tuk-tu, the spiritual and temporal Sovereign.

President of the Mongol Cabinet, which was despatched to Russia by the Hu-tuk-tu, has carried out one of its objects of thanking the Tsar for Russian help in Mongolia, and is now endeavouring to obtain further financial help, and intends to visit the chief industrial centres of Russia in order to develop Russo-Mongol commercial relations.

Whatever the success of this Mission may be, it is a fact that it was brilliantly received by the Tsar at Livadia in the Crimea last November.

Decorations were scattered broadcast. Prince Sain-Noin, in the name of the Hu-tuk-tu, decorated the Tsar and Tsarevitch with the new Mongol order of Jenghis Khan, and the Tsar bestowed on Sain-Noin the order of the White Eagle, and other decorations on members of the Mission.

It is mooted that this Mission may proceed to Berlin to discuss the matter of establishing a German Consulate in Urga.[1]

Germany is apparently becoming uneasy at the signing of the Russo-Chinese Convention in November; she fears that her commercial rights in China may be impaired, and has informed the Russian Government, that as a supporter of the principle of equal treatment for all nations in China,

[1] Information has now been received that the Mongol Mission left St. Petersburg for Mongolia viâ Moscow on 5th January. It has succeeded in obtaining further pecuniary assistance, and help in the military sense, from the Russian Government, so far as such assistance does not constitute a menace to the peaceful relations between Russia and China.

she was unable to concede general privileges to another Power in definite parts of the Chinese Empire. In consideration, however, of Russia's special position as a neighbouring state of China, she declared that she was ready to recognise such Russian rights as were founded by special treaties, so far as the treaties were made known officially to the German Government, and the rights did not conflict with the principle of equality.

It will be interesting to see what action, if any, the British Government is prepared to take in this matter in its final developments.

Russia, on the 12th December 1913, through her Minister at Peking, Monsieur Kroupensky, at a meeting of the Diplomatic Corps openly suggested that as order had been restored in Chihli province, and the Chinese Government was now in a position to maintain order there, and to protect foreign lives and property, the foreign forces in North China should all be withdrawn; at the same time, Russia intimated that whether the other Powers concurred or not, the Russian Government intended to withdraw her troops forthwith. It is regarded in Peking that this action is in pursuance of the promise to Yuan Shih Kai for his acceptance of the Russian conditions embodied in the Russo-Chinese agreement regarding Mongolia.

The Mongolian question looks as if it may develop into one for the Powers' interference. Meanwhile the Mongols, despising negotiations, have

redoubled their efforts in the field. Although the Hu-tuk-tu has been ordered to suspend hostilities with China, the war party at Urga is very powerful and obstinate, and fighting against the Chinese still continues.

A Mongol army, consisting of troops from Urga reinforced by numbers of Hung-hu-tzu under Malunga,[1] said to be two thousand strong, recently defeated the Chinese at Hsian-huang-chi to the north of Kalgan. The Mongols are said to have had four field-guns with them, and to have been assisted by several Russians.

The Chinese army, numbering two thousand, lost nearly half their men, seven hundred rifles, many rounds of ammunition, and a considerable amount of stores. The battle lasted for two days, and the Mongols displayed great bravery.

After this defeat, the Chinese retired to Tamachun, where they were for a second time routed by Malunga. Eventually the Chinese General Lu ordered a general retirement on Shihpatai, and at the end of November this Chinese force was reported to be 30 miles north of Kalgan, to the east of the Urga-Kalgan camel road, closely watched by Mongol scouts.

The Chinese attribute their reverses to the intense cold. They say that to keep the hands from freezing, fur gloves must be worn, and that it is

[1] Leader of the Mongol band of robbers, who killed Mr. Grant of the Chinese Telegraph Service, in the summer of 1913.

impossible to handle their rifles properly with frozen fingers. The Mongols, on the other hand, are inured to the cold.

Still further reinforcements have been despatched by the Chinese to the edge of the Mongolian plateau, and Mr. Pan-Shih-Chun, of the Nanyuan Aviation School near Peking has been recently sent from Peking to Kalgan with several aeroplanes and boxes of explosives. This air fleet, it is reported, will co-operate with the Chinese army against these Mongol bands. The Mongols declare they do not fear the Chinese on foot, on horse, or in the air, and their campaign will only end with the capture of Kalgan.

According to intelligence received from Urga in December 1913, the Chinese have executed Gand Chor, one of the principal Living Buddhas in Eastern Mongolia, and six Lamas; many Mongols living in that locality have also been killed.

Gand Chor was in Peking a year ago, and was received in a very favourable manner by the President Yuan Shih Kai, honours being heaped upon him.

If the execution of Gand Chor has really taken place, the prospect of a settlement between the Mongols and Chinese is seriously jeopardised, as it is calculated to incense the whole of Mongolia.

The situation is difficult, especially when it is realised that Kalgan is the gateway to Peking and only 114 miles by rail from the capital of China.

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