

said he had not spoken himself to the merchant, but had only heard the report of what he had said. If this trader had indeed met with a white man, the question was, Who was he? This report showed more than ever the propriety of the search which the Geographical Society had set on foot.

The following Paper was read :—

1. *Notes on Chinese Tartary.* By Capt. SHERARD OSBORN, R.N., C.B.

CAPTAIN OSBORN stated that he had written his memoir to accompany a carefully prepared diagram, which he now presented to the Society, of Chinese Tartary as it exists, so far as the treaties with Russia are concerned. He acknowledged the assistance he had received, in compiling the map, from the recent admirable Russian surveys of Eastern Siberia, and the map of the caravan routes in Central Asia, published by Colonel Walker, of the Trigonometrical Survey of Hindostan. Quoting from the geographical information which is contained in a publication issued in Canton some years ago, the 'Chinese Repository,' he proceeded to deal with the broad geographical features of Chinese Tartary, dividing it into the three great sections of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Ilf, or, as it is sometimes erroneously called, Eastern Turkestan. Half of Manchuria, it was shown, had, by the Treaty of Tientsin in 1858, passed into Russian possession; but, owing to an almost impassable range of mountains being found to exist from the River Amur to the southern extreme, the communication between the Russian coast-settlements and Eastern Siberia was in no wise improved; but Captain Osborn hoped the day was not far distant when the Russians would come into possession of the whole of Manchuria, when, with the aid of the water communication of the Songari River and the port of Newchang, in the Gulf of Leotung, much would be done towards giving Russian Siberia that outlet to the seas of India and China which her rapidly increasing importance and commercial development justify the Russians in craving. The presence of Russian settlements so close to Peking, the lecturer argued, would act very healthily on the Chinese Government; and, so far as Great Britain is concerned, we ought, on every ground, to welcome any means of improved intercourse with Siberia, which, it must not be forgotten, now forms one of the largest and most powerful states in Asia. Passing to Mongolia, Captain Osborn then drew a picture of its physical condition, and called attention to the invasion of portions of China Proper by Mussulman hordes, flying before the pressure of Russian arms in Central Asia. He refuted the idea of the utter impracticability of the country for troops or armies, and, apart from the well known fact that in ages gone by the horsemen of this region marched west to the Danube, and south to the Tropic,

he related some incidents of a migration, on two occasions, of a host of Tartars from the Great Wall to the Volga and back, proving the journey practicable even for women and children, though a severe one. Turning then to the least known portion of Chinese Tartary,—which the lecturer dealt with under the name of Ili, north and south of the Celestial Mountains,—the peculiar basins into which it was cut up by the enclosing ranges of mountains, so that the rivers—one of them 1500 miles long—discharged into lakes instead of the ocean, was dwelt upon; its magnificent mountain scenery, its diversified climate and products, the ancient cities of Yarkand, Aksu, Khotan, and others, were touched upon, and the close approximation of the Russian and British frontiers was clearly shown, as well as the advantages likely to result to the cause of order, civilization, and Christianity in Asia, if those two great powers worked as they ought to do, earnestly and in a friendly spirit together, in establishing order and good government in the lands which, lying beyond the Himalayas, have for so many centuries been in the hands of cut-throat Mussulmen, or stupid Mongols, trained to exclusion and hatred of the foreigner by the policy of Peking.

The PRESIDENT, in returning the thanks of the meeting to Captain Osborn for his important paper, said that, with reference to the progress of Russian research, the author had not exaggerated in stating that the Russians had thrown more light upon the geography of the northern portions of Central Asia than all other nations put together. He confessed that he admired the zeal of the Russians in carrying out geographical research. He believed there was now a feeling on the part of many who formerly thought otherwise, that there was no ground for alarm on our part that a civilized Christian nation like Russia should dominate the “cut-throat” tribes of Central Asia, and open up a freer intercourse with China by land. He thought there was no ground for jealousy on our part: on the contrary, we ought to be very glad that the Russians were making such progress in opening up new lines of communication through Central Asia; that is, so long as they did not come too far south, and approach our Indian possessions. Among the Russian geographers who had distinguished themselves in Asiatic exploration, he might enumerate Semenov, Radde, Struve, and Boutakoff. In connection with this part of the subject, he had the pleasure to announce that the Council of the Society had that day adjudicated one of their gold medals to Admiral Boutakoff, for his discoveries in the Sea of Aral, and for opening up the Jaxartes for the first time to steamers.

Mr. HORATIO LAY, C.B. (formerly Imperial Commissioner of Customs in China), said it was in the year 1650 that the Russians first made their appearance on the Amur River. Their progress since then had been slow but sure, and they had met with great opposition on the part of the Chinese. In the year 1854, during the Crimean war, they formed, at the mouth of the Amur River, a secure port of refuge for their Pacific squadron. The river is navigable for 1890 miles. Nicolaiefsk is the chief seaport, and, with the liberality which had marked the Russian Government in this region, it had been declared a free port for twenty years to come. He (Mr. Lay) believed the advance of a strong civilized power, like Russia, in Northern and Central

Asia was certainly to be welcomed, inasmuch as the Chinese were growing weaker, and perfectly incompetent to rule the Mongol tribes. Their present hold on the Mongols was due to the investiture of the chiefs with titles and honours, and to largesses distributed among their followers. It was quite time that a more powerful people should come in, with the view of ruling and keeping these men in order. It was a singular circumstance that the Mongols of the North should follow the occupation of shepherds, and should lead the quiet life they did, considering the career of conquest they formerly achieved. In 1202, under Genghis Khan, they swept the country from Southern Persia as far as the north of China, and in 1215 they captured Peking. A nephew of Genghis Khan invaded Russia in 1235, captured Moscow, and ravaged Poland and Hungary. That this race of people should now be following the quiet life of shepherds was a singular change; for the Russians did not throw off the Mongol yoke until the fifteenth century.

Sir HENRY RAWLINSON said he had listened to the paper with great attention and interest. It was an admirable *resumé* of the varied information which we possessed regarding Central Asia, and it had the further advantage that it presented the subject in a popular and interesting point of view. With regard to the three divisions of the country which Captain Osborn had noticed—Manchuria, Mongolia, and Turkestan—that was not only a geographical division, it was also an ethnological one. The inhabitants of these three great divisions were in reality so many great branches of the Turkish race, speaking languages which might possibly be of the same family, but which were so distinct from each other that they were not mutually intelligible. He was not well acquainted with the eastern division of this great region, and should not therefore discuss it; but with regard to the western division, he must say he objected to Captain Osborn's extension of the Russian frontier line (as exhibited on the map) considerably further south than the actual condition of things warranted. Captain Osborn told them that by the Treaty of Peking the Russians were authorized by the Emperor of China to extend their frontier as far south as Khokand. The Emperor of China might just as well have mentioned Calcutta as the limit of the Russian dominion, because he had no more authority over Khokand than he had over Calcutta. China had never possessed a shadow of power to the west of the Thian-Shan Mountains. It was only, indeed, within the last hundred years—between 1756 and 1759—that she had extended her dominion over any part of Western Turkestan. A great expedition was then sent out, to which the Chinese emperor, with that enlightenment which distinguished his race, attached three scientific European astronomers, who in the course of the march backwards and forwards, between China and the Jaxartes, determined the position of some fifty or sixty of the principal towns and stations; and until within the last twenty years, when the English on one side and the Russians on the other, had been gradually approaching the central desert both from the south and north, it was the observations of these Jesuits which alone enabled us to construct a map or to possess any accurate knowledge of the geography of that part of Asia. No doubt the Treaty of Peking did give the Russians very great advantages in Central Asia; but the main advantage was the right of establishing consuls in the three principal commercial towns of Turkestan—Chughuchek, Kuldja, and Kashgar. The Russians immediately acted upon their rights at Chughuchek and Kuldja, but they had not been able to establish a consul at Kashgar. The Mahomedan inhabitants had now risen against the Chinese, and in many places had entirely destroyed them. At Kuldja there was continual fighting for two years. The Chinese were driven out ultimately, the Russian factory was destroyed, and from that time the place had been in the hands of the Zungar native population. Captain Osborn had detailed the routes leading from China through Central Asia with great accuracy: the southern route which led direct to Khotan had, however, been

shut up for the last twenty or thirty years, owing to sand-drifts. The route which had always been of the greatest importance, and which Captain Osborn had but imperfectly noticed, was the one which connected Russia with India. That route led from Semipolatsinsk to Kuldja; from Kuldja across the great glacier pass of Muzat to Aksu; and from Aksu, when the country was pretty quiet, it followed down the Khotan River to Khotan, and thence to Leh in Little Thibet, and over the mountains to India. It was not by any means a difficult route, and, when tranquillity was restored, there was no doubt it would again become a great line of traffic. Captain Osborn had further called attention to the discovery of another and better route from Khotan, by Mr. Johnson, which he believed would lead into India without passing the great mountains of Thibet at all, by proceeding to the eastward and round the Kuen-luen chain. That line showed traces of having been a great imperial road in antiquity: it was discovered in its southern portion many years ago by Moorcroft; and, as Lord Strangford had stated at a former meeting, it was on this very road that Moore's famous poem of 'Lallah Rookh' was supposed to be recited while the party were travelling from Delhi to Khotan. With regard to the political part of the question, he (Sir Henry) was not an alarmist, but he did not go the length of Captain Osborn in actually wishing that the Russian territory should reach as far as the frontier of British India. For the sake of civilization and humanity, it might be perhaps desirable that the "cut-throat" tribes of Central Asia should be eliminated altogether from Asia. But we should remember, on the other hand, that the removal of these tribes might very seriously embarrass us. We must consider, indeed, that India is held by us as a conquered country, and inhabited by an alien race, and the same remark might also apply to the Russian possessions. If it had been merely a question of Russia and England being brought into contact in Europe, no great evil need have been anticipated; but Russian conquest and English conquest meeting each other in Asia, made a very different political conjunction. The natural consequence, indeed, would be that the people of India, in times of disquiet, would look to Russia for assistance; and those whom Russia had conquered would look to England, in the same way. There would thus be mutual recriminations, intrigues, a constant state of turmoil and warfare on the frontier, which, so far from civilizing the country, would have precisely the contrary effect. What he would prefer would be that there should remain always a small strip of intermediate neutral territory to serve as a kind of "political buffer." Across that the two nations might trade, and advance the cause of civilization in every possible way without politically interfering with each other. Entertaining, as he did, this view, he could not endorse the opinions expressed in the article in the January No. of the 'Edinburgh Review,' which was the exponent of the present policy of the Governor-General of India. Advantage, he thought, should be taken of any favourable opening for putting forward our feelers into Central Asia, not for the purpose of intrigue or hostility to Russia, but with the view of pushing our trade and advancing civilization on our side as Russia was doing on hers. Thanks to Sir Andrew Waugh and his assistants, we had surveyed the whole country from the frontier of India up to the Karakoram, which was the territorial limit of our ally the Maharajah of Cashmere. The attempt to go beyond that point was discouraged by the Government, for fear of leading to political complications. He should like, however, to see this restriction relaxed, and he thought the Geographical Society would be doing good service if it could in any way facilitate expeditions, such as that projected by Captain Smith and other officers, who wished to push across Central Asia towards China, and in fact into Mongolia. With regard to the medal to be given to Admiral Boutakoff, he was delighted to think that our country, represented by the Geographical Society, had risen above those petty party considerations and national jealousies which we were sometimes supposed to labour under; and that

we could, irrespective of nationality, acknowledge the merits of a man like Admiral Boutakoff, who, during the last few years, had performed the greatest geographical feat that had been achieved in Central Asia since the days of Alexander Burnes.

Mr. TRELAWNEY SAUNDERS said there were two maps* in the Society's collection which gave much more information than the map under discussion. With regard to the changes now taking place in these regions, we ought to be prepared for the possible contingencies. Chinese Tartary had been the birthplace of warlike hordes that in former times overran Europe and Asia; and when, after years of peace under a settled government, it should again overflow with a teeming population, what would become of the surplus? They would not advance to the icy north, but would naturally turn to the south. Unless we were prepared to meet that issue, we ought not to encourage Russia to advance into Central Asia. On the other hand, without any desire to increase our own frontiers, we as a trading, industrial people, ought to encourage peaceful industry and production in the great pastoral regions of Central Asia, which were capable of producing wool to an untold extent. Nothing could be more fraught with beneficial results than the promotion of intercourse with the local chiefs, pointing out to them that their products would always find a ready market on the Indian frontier. Nothing remained in the way of such a trade but the obstacles interposed by the Chinese Government, which he thought might be removed by a little firmness on our part. Under the Treaty of Peking we had a right to be placed on the footing of the most favoured nation, and to be allowed to establish a consul and to build a church at Kashgar, the same as the Russians claimed the right to do by treaty.

Captain SHERARD OSBORN, in the course of a brief reply, said, in making their treaty with China, the Russians decidedly considered that the Chinese had the right to give them permission to come to Khokand, or they would not have asked permission. He had merely drawn the frontier south of that place, to which Sir Henry Rawlinson had called attention, to show the extent of territory to which the Russians now had access: he did not say that they were there, only that the right to go there did exist. Adverting to the possibility of the Russian armies advancing as far as Bokhara and Khiva, about which many people were incredulous, Captain Osborn narrated the main particulars of an extraordinary migration of a horde of Calmucks 600,000 strong, in the winter of 1771, from the banks of the Volga to the banks of Lake Balkash, in the face of the greatest difficulties, and with the loss of only one-third of their number, to show, as he said, that what was possible once was possible again. To cross the deserts and passes into India was only a question of time. There were no more than 120 miles of desert; all the rest of the country was covered with Calmuck hordes who wandered about it at all seasons; and the notion we had of its impassable character was owing purely to our ignorance. He had no doubt that, when the Russians found it to their interest to advance, these wastes would become inhabited.

The PRESIDENT said he had never at any time expressed a wish that the Russians should become the conquerors of this great region. Russia had no such object; her object was trade with China; and as long as she went from west to east to trade with China, and kept up a communication which she had enjoyed long before we had any conquests in India, she was perfectly entitled to do so. He firmly hoped that the great mountain barrier and impassable tract between the two nations would be left for ages to come. The Russians had shown the greatest openness on the subject of their researches in Central Asia, and had communicated to the Royal Geographical Society copies of all maps they had published.

* Stanford's Library Map of Asia, and Stanford's Map of China and Japan.