

## CHAPTER XI

### A LITTLE STUDY OF THE MAP

**P**OLITICAL history is as the flesh applied to the dry bones of the skeleton, geography. Study of the one implies knowledge of the other. Were we not, from youth up, generally familiar with the geography of those countries whose history most concerns us, we should the more clearly and often be brought to consider a relation which is obscured, even by its familiarity. The osteology of Central Asia and Tibet is peculiarly important to a study of Asian politics because of its unusual characteristics. While the field for exploration there is still considerable, yet the important outlines have been well determined by recent travel. To the practised eye the map (opposite page ) will be, perhaps, more instructive than textual description, but a *résumé* in words will aid the general reader.

[Let us begin our survey at the point where we crossed the Russo-Chinese frontier on the way from Osh to Kashgar—in the Alai Mountains, approximately  $75^{\circ}$  east,  $40^{\circ}$  north. Using round figures for all distances and locations, let us now go north-east twelve hundred and fifty miles. We shall then be at the top of Mongolia,  $95^{\circ}$  east,  $53^{\circ}$  north. Everything west of this line is Russian, everything east of it Chinese—at present,—and our top