

## CHAPTER XXI

### SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF TURKESTAN<sup>1</sup>

THE curtain rises on Turkestan about 200 B.C. Khotan is known in the Chinese records at about that date. In 177 B.C. these records set forth the expulsion of Khotanese and Kashgaris from their homes due to the incoming, from North-east Mongolia, of swarms of Yue-che, of Mongol or Tartan race, who sought new homes *vi et armis*. Those whose vines and fig-trees they coveted were a people far advanced beyond the Yue-che in all the civil arts. Enough has been said in connection with the ancient MSS. recently discovered (p. 60) to indicate that the Khotan country (doubtless including the region farther westward) was the seat of some learning as early as the date ascribed to this movement; and even without the specific evidence which has been found to indicate that fact, it might be fairly deduced from the mere existence of several considerable cities in the Tarim basin. Their existence in such a land supposes extensive systems of irrigation, and these, in turn, always bespeak a highly

<sup>1</sup> The author has delivered several lectures on the journey recounted in this book. Subsequent conversation with his hearers has suggested the need of a short presentation—such as here is attempted—of the history of Turkestan. It is not essential to an understanding of urgent problems, but will, perhaps, interest some lovers of the past.