

aid in the overthrow of a mighty rebel against the throne. There followed other rude attacks from Tibetans, who for a time threw themselves across Western China, cutting communication with Turkestan. Again a vigorous ruler was born into the Imperial throne or a vigorous usurper chanced to seize it; whereupon the annoying Tibetans were hurled back to their lonely seats. A little later, another Mongol people, invading from the north, grasped the sheep-prey which was the desire of many wolves. These were the Hoi-he or Hu-he, doubtless only another branch of that puzzling, widespread family, whose kaleidoscopic marches and countermarches across Asia have given to historians a fine juggling exercise with shifting names—Mongols, Tartars, Hueng-nu, Yue-che, Uigurs, Tanguts, Ephthalites, Tu-Kiu, Hoi-He, Kirghiz, Kalmuk.

From the Chinese Wall to the Dnieper, from the Tibetan frontier to the Arctic Zone, they are seen fighting each other; overrunning the borders of civilisation; upsetting the beginnings of order which some of their own blood may have established; powerful while yet fresh from the steppe or the mountain-side; easily corrupted by contact with civil luxury; forming widespread and ephemeral organisations which passed leaving no traces within their bounds and only blood to mark their excursions; generally careless about religious matters; building little and moving much; they are the will-o'-the-wisp of Asian history. And the story of Turkestan is the story of one inroad after another, ever with reversion to China.