

joyed my hostess's hot buns and excellent plain dishes, which was, perhaps, just as well, for I had an attack of fever and had to take quinine.

Now that my journey through Russian Turkestan is to come to an end in a few hours, I must jot down my impressions, superficial and yet definite, of the feeling among the Sarts and Kirghiz. One is struck by their inclination to criticise and scrutinise existing conditions and their apparent contempt for the representatives of the governing authorities. You never hear a word in recognition of the benefits they and their country have obtained in the form of two railway lines, better roads, a flourishing cotton industry and probably much besides that I have had no opportunity of seeing, and above all in the security and peace that this people, impoverished and weakened by constant warfare, now enjoys. Instead, whether you wish to or not, you have to listen to their criticism, apparently often unjustified. Illogicality, childishness and inability to take a broad view of things are typical of the Mohammedans of Turkestan. Seizing on trifles they criticise everything, even reforms that undoubtedly represent a step forward in this or that sphere of civilisation. It is certain that large classes among the people of Turkestan entertain political dreams and hopes that no longer seem to them utopian after the unfortunate outcome of the last Russo-Japanese war. Among the Sarts such dreams take a more concrete form and seem to be more widely spread than among the Kirghiz. Impotent at present owing to the lack of arms, the latter are conscious of the fact that only a foreign power can realise their political aspirations. Though they do not as yet represent any danger to the Empire, these people have apparently, owing to the course of events, attained a certain measure of political maturity which expresses itself in their demands for reforms, extended rights and other aims and ambitions. The question is whether Russia, by enlightened leadership, can succeed in guiding this process in a direction consonant with imperial policy, or whether the leadership of these people who scarcely read anything but the Koran at present, is to pass into the hands of powers inimical to Russia and this ferment, by degrees, adopt the form of a general Asiatic or Anti-Russian Mohammedan movement.

We crossed the Chinese frontier in the actual bed of the river and some distance further on we rode across the rapid Qizil Su, the water being up to the horses' bellies. One of the pack-horses stumbled on the stony bottom and disappeared immediately under water. The horse and its burden were fished out, though one case containing our medical stores was only salvaged about 150 feet below the ford. From the river the road leads along a cleft in the rocks in a N, NE and finally an E direction, debouching into the valley of a river that leads in a southerly direction to Qizil Su. Across the frontier the character of the country changes as if by magic. Vegetation disappears and the mountains, covered with stones, thick gravel and sand, grow lower. The strong spring floods carry along masses of boulders that remain lying in the dry bed of the river. The mountains with their alluvial structure, the boulders and the barren ground indicate that at some time this was the bottom of a sea or river. A wild and desolate landscape, wherever you look; the people, too, have disappeared. The road leads into the valley of the river Qara Terek which is reached in 3 1/2 hours and followed southward until the Naghara-chaldi runs into Qizil

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24th.