

—not the possibility of anything; on the other—plenty. And the climate has as great extremes as the physical appearance. The summer is scorchingly hot anywhere outside the small portion that is cultivated and shaded with trees; and in the winter the thermometer falls to zero Fahrenheit. This is the natural result of the position of the country in the very heart of the greatest continent, where none of the tempering effects of the sea could possibly reach it.

The people, however, do not share this characteristic of running to extremes. They are the essence of imperturbable mediocrity. They live in a land where—in the places in which anything at all can be grown—the necessaries of life can be produced easily and plentifully. Their mountain barriers shield them from severe outside competition, and they lead a careless, easy, apathetic existence. Nothing disturbs them. Revolutions have occurred, but they have mostly been carried out by foreigners. One set of rulers has suddenly replaced another set, but the rulers in both instances have nearly all been foreigners. Yakoob Beg was a foreigner, and most of the officials under him were foreigners, so that even when their hereditary rulers—the Chinese—were driven out for a time, the people of Chinese Turkestan did not rule themselves. On the contrary, in all these changes, they appear to have looked on with indifference. Such a people are, as might naturally be inferred, not a fighting race. They are a race of cultivators and small shopkeepers, and nothing more, and nothing would make them anything more. It is their destiny, shut away here from the rest of the world, to lead a dull, spiritless, but easy and perhaps happy life, which they allow nothing to disturb.

How different all this is to what we had found in Manchuria! There we had the keen, industrious Chinaman, working his very hardest—working away from morning to night, not to live merely, but to get the utmost he could out of the land,