

The Pashm of Turfan and of other places in the Kashghar dominions being one of the articles of export, deserves notice amongst the products of the country; the demand for it in Kashmir and British India is however so small that it can never have much influence on the trade of the country generally.

It has been supposed that precious stones are easily obtained in the markets of Eastern Turkestan. The impression which has prevailed on this subject is erroneous, and geological investigation has made it clear that whatever precious stones exist, have been imported. Rubies, emeralds, and lapis lazuli from Badakshan, pearls from Persia, and turquoises from Khorassan (by way of Bokhara), and corals from China.

Wherever Chinese wealth has had an influence, coral, emeralds, rubies, and pearls have been used in the decoration of Chinese idols, and the ornaments of women; but few however remain in Kashghar, excepting amongst the treasures of the Amir, who is said to have successfully despoiled the palaces and temples of former Chinese rulers, and no doubt possesses considerable wealth in the form of precious stones.

No clearer review of the actual state of the trade between British India and Eastern Turkestan can be given than that contained in Mr. Shaw's last report on trade at Ladakh, and the "proceedings of the hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, in the Foreign Department," extracts from which are herein incorporated.

"It is to be remembered that, though the development of trade between Yarkand and British India has received the careful attention of the British Government for upwards of six years, though transit duties have been abolished, and special officers appointed to watch over the interests of traders, the total value of the trade with Eastern Turkestan, though the greatest on record, amounted last year to less than £60,000, a great increase compared with what it *was*, but after all an amount which must be considered altogether insignificant; and here it may be noted that the statement made in the first paragraph of the report that the trade through Ladakh increased by two lakhs of rupees, is perhaps likely to mislead. It is true that the sum total of imports and exports by the several routes increased in value from Rupees 15,84,800 to Rupees 17,76,729, but, as explained in paragraph 38, the imports and exports being the same goods, the value of the transit trade is really only half the total shown above.

"Again, it must be confessed that the greater our experience of the routes between Indian and Yarkand, the greater do the difficulties appear in the way of establishing a satisfactory trade route, owing to the length of the journey, the enormous altitudes to be traversed, the arid and unproductive character of a large portion of the country, the absence of population, and the deficiency of carriage and supplies."

The remarks which follow on the commerce of the country under the Amir's rule, and which are supported by notes in the Appendix, claim to be interesting, as resulting from observations made in the two principal markets of Eastern Turkestan which are open directly to foreign trade, *viz.*, Kashghar and Yarkand, the latter receiving its supplies principally from British India, and the former so far as foreign productions are concerned, being at present wholly dependent on Russian sources of supply through Almati (Vernoe) and Khokand.

Russian articles furnished to the markets of Eastern Turkestan are, in many respects, a close imitation of the products which from the earliest days have been in use, and are of Chinese introduction. With some of these, owing to their weight, the Indian market cannot profitably compete, but they must at all times represent a large item in the consignments from the Russian side.

I.—Iron and cast-iron vessels; the former used in the manufacture of horse shoes, and of implements of agriculture, and in the Amir's workshops, the latter in use in every household as cooking vessels.

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NOTE.—From Yules' "Cathay and the way thither," preliminary Essay XLII.—(Quoting Pliny.)

"Ex omnibus autem generibus palma Serico ferro est. Seres hoc cum vestibus suis pellibus que mittunt."

Again (Julien quoted by Lassen.)

"We found cast-iron pots and pans of remarkable quality to form a chief item among the miscellaneous notions" (apart from the silk which is the staple imported by the Chinese into Ava by the Yunan road. The art of casting iron