

We have had practical experience of the fact that Hindoo and Mahomedan traders are treated with impartiality, and no sketch of the commercial prospects of the Amir's country would be complete which did not bring prominently to notice the absence of prejudice which rendered possible in diplomatic negotiations the consideration of questions affecting Mahomedan and Hindoo traders without prejudice to the latter.

The system of barter which prevails in the markets of Eastern Turkestan is inseparable from the conditions of the trade, and the length of time occupied in passing from market to market. I have already mentioned that the evils attending it will be modified by the issue of gold and silver coinage from the Amir's Mint. In the relations of the Yarkand market with India, the length of time during which an Indian merchant trading across the frontier must be absent from his home, when once he has determined to cross the Karakorum, makes the investments for the return journey a part of the single venture which has enticed him to face the journey, and he does not count his profits until he is safe at home once more.

On reaching the city of Yarkand he secures rooms in one of the principal serais, carefully stores his goods, and then, through the medium of the Delál or Agent attached to his particular fraternity, makes known their number and quality in the market.

It is only by slow degrees that his bales are unpacked, and his wares exposed, while little by little he accumulates a store of goods for the return venture. The real skill of the merchant becomes apparent in selecting articles for the return journey, that will bring him a fair profit in the Indian markets, and in converting the copper coinage which he must necessarily receive in large quantities into gold or other portable material.

A quick return in this description of commerce is practically impossible, nor is it necessary to traders whose personal expenditure is at all times exceptionally small; but this fact must exclude European competitors from the market, or must, at any rate, place them at so great a disadvantage, as to render it unlikely that they can undertake to trade on their own account with success.

The market does not admit of any large consignment of a single description being readily disposed of, and the selection of a mixed consignment of those articles most likely to prove acceptable, requires considerable skill and experience.

It will be seen that difference of quality only in piece-goods does not assure a proportionate advantage in sale: the fact is that choice of color is of more account than quality, and fashion has a great deal to say to color.

Bright colored goods, and cloths of one color throughout, are much appreciated. With prints, the larger patterns are the most esteemed; it is however essential that goods upon which figures of men or animals are represented should not be offered for sale in the market of a Mahomedan country.

Amongst the upper classes, greys and stone colors are fashionable, being in keeping with the unostentatious costume of the Amir himself, who aims at a singular simplicity in dress, as in other matters.

Goods are often disposed of on a trust extending over two or three months, with no other than a personal security, and instances of failure in payment are not known. This is a convenience to the foreign trader, the borrower becoming practically his agent for sale.

Previous to the arrival of the Mission in Yarkand it had been supposed that green tea only was in use in Turkestan, no other having been, in former times, imported from China: it is now, however, placed beyond doubt that the black teas of our Indian plantations are highly approved of. The adulteration of China tea has, too, caused Indian teas to be sought for.

In the present condition of the market, goods of the best quality will as a rule prove the most profitable investment for merchants proceeding from India to Yarkand.

The introduction of adulterated or inferior goods from our side might destroy the confidence which has been established through the long residence of a British Mission in Kashghar.

Assuming that the most seasonable time for the passage of the mountain plateau of the Karakorum is towards the end of September, the Indian trader will leave Ladakh, if possible,