

may be regarded as of no account. They have been squeezed to the utmost, but would prefer to remain under the dominion of China. If they are questioned, they say "The Chinese plunder us, but they do not drive and hustle us, and we can do as we please." This opinion agrees with that of the Andijanis, or natives of Russian Turkestan, who assert that Russian rule is much disliked among them, owing to the harassing administration to which they are subjected. The natives of Sin-Chiang are opposed to all change, whether for the better or the worse; but if Russia were to administer their country with honesty and justice, leaving perfect freedom in religious matters, there can be no doubt that the majority would eventually recognise great improvement in their condition. A Russian occupation of the province need not, *so far as commerce is concerned*, appreciably affect the interests of Great Britain. The trade with India is small and is decreasing; few British travellers visit the region, and if to traders and travellers fair treatment were assured, the change of government would probably be advantageous to both. No sane man acquainted with Sin-Chiang would advise the Government of India to saddle itself with its administration.

Nevertheless, it is necessary for the British-Indian Government to keep a careful watch on the movements of Russia in Central Asia, especially in Tibet. In that part of the world Russia cares less, in the first instance, for the development of her trade than the enlargement of her boundaries. Her settled purpose of territorial extension advances steadily, though without haste, and it seems to be her destiny to absorb and reorganise for her own purposes the semi-barbarous nations on her frontiers. If her designs looked no further, there would be no cause for disquietude, but every southward advance of Russia brings her nearer to India, and Russian officers and writers do