

foot of the Nan-shan, and thus cut off the Tarim basin from all direct communication with the Chinese Empire. Yet the Chinese administrators and garrisons within the Tarim basin, notwithstanding their isolation, succeeded in holding out for another forty years—an heroic but obscure chapter in history.

The period of about four hundred years following the disappearance of T'ang rule is for the most part a dark one in the history of the Tarim basin. We know that Tibetan domination in that region did not outlast a century and also that Islam was spreading under the Turkish chiefs who acquired control over Kashgar and other oases in the western portion of the Tarim basin. From about the middle of the tenth century onwards this led to the gradual overthrow of Buddhist doctrine and culture by force as well as by propaganda.

In the north-eastern portion, however, and in the outlying territory of Turfan, Buddhism continued to flourish much longer, side by side with Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity, under the protection of Uighur chiefs. To the predominance of those chiefs and to the capacity shown elsewhere, too, by Turkish tribes to digest other racial elements from conquered populations more advanced in civilization we must attribute the fact that throughout the Tarim basin Eastern Turkish is now, and has been for centuries, the only language spoken. Yet the population there still retains in the main the *Homo Alpinus* type, preserved in purity by the Iranian-speaking hillmen of the Pamir region (Fig. 133), and represented also in Western Europe, and shows but slight admixture of true Turkish blood.