

sented by the forty-five "block-prints" which are fully described and illustrated in Dr. Hoernle's First Report. These, too, showed an extraordinary variety of scripts in their ever-recurring formulas, and were often of quite imposing dimensions in size and bulk.

Islam Akhun, when once his defence had collapsed, was not chary about giving technical details about the forgers' methods of work. In fact, he seemed rather to relish the interest I showed in them. Thus he fully described the procedure followed in preparing the paper that was used for the production of manuscripts or "block prints," as well as the treatment to which they were subjected in order to give them an ancient look. The fact of Khotan being the main centre of the Turkestan paper industry was a great convenience for the forgers, as they could readily supply themselves with any variety and size of paper needed. The sheets of modern Khotan paper were first dyed yellow or light brown by means of 'Togh-rugha,' a product of the Toghrak tree, which, when dissolved in water, gives a staining fluid.

When the dyed sheets had been written or printed upon they were hung over fireplaces so as to receive by smoke the proper hue of antiquity. It was, no doubt, in the course of this manipulation that the sheets occasionally sustained the burns and scorplings of which some of the "old books" transmitted to Calcutta display evident marks. Afterwards they were bound up into volumes. This, however, seems to have been the least efficiently managed department of the concern, for the coarse imitation of European volumes which is unmistakable in the case of most of the later products, as well as the utter unsuitability of the fastenings employed (usually pegs of copper or twists of paper), would *à priori* have justified grave suspicions as to their genuineness. Finally the finished manuscripts or books were treated to a liberal admixture between their pages of the fine sand of the desert, in order to make them tally with the story of their long burial. I well remember how, in the spring of 1898, I had to apply a clothes brush before I could examine one of these forged "block-prints" that had reached a collector in Kashmir.